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# THE GREAT WAR... **I WAS THERE!**

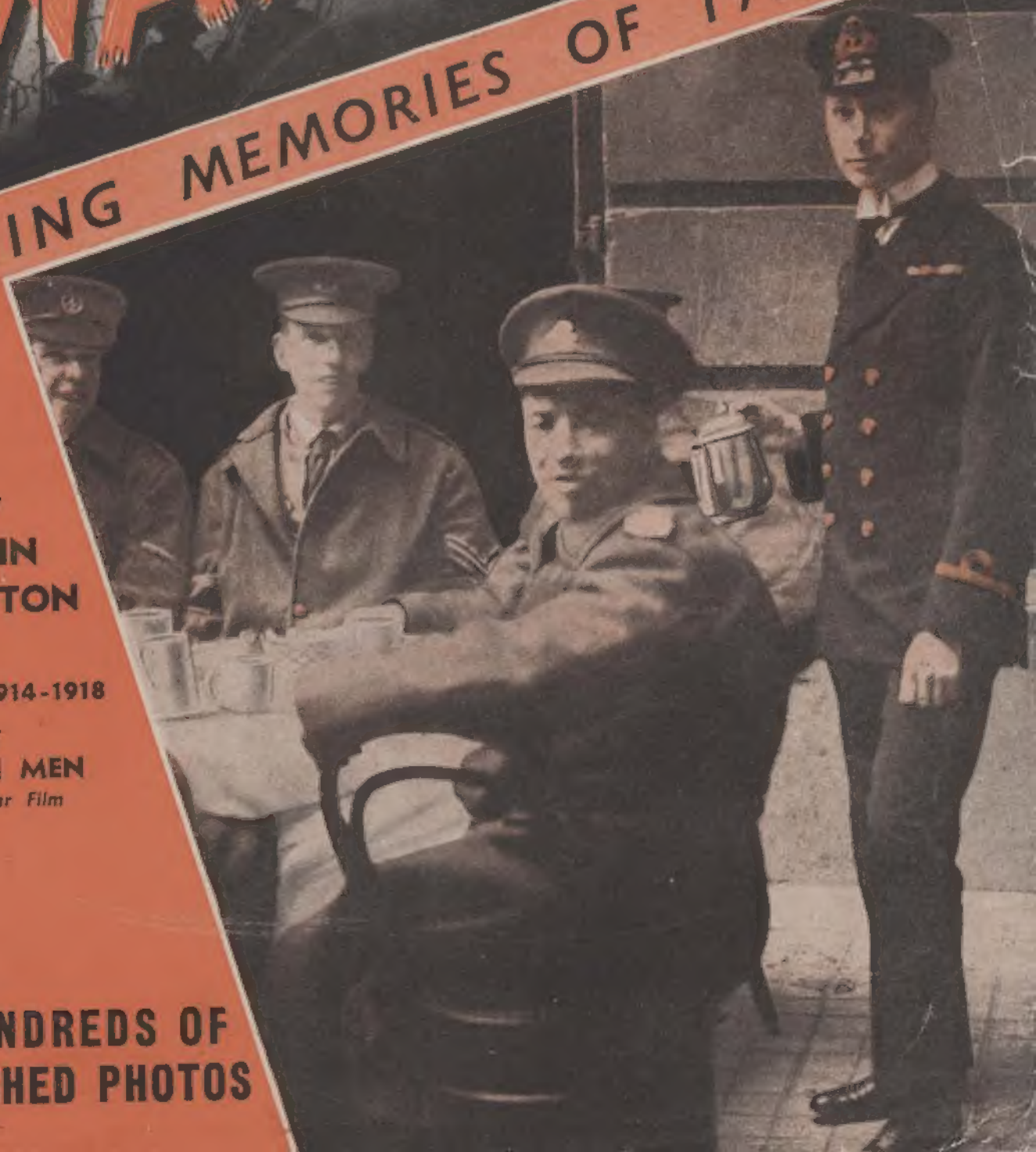
**UNDYING MEMORIES OF 1914-1918**

*Edited by*  
**SIR JOHN  
HAMMERTON**

*Editor of*  
**WORLD WAR 1914-1918**

*Writer of*  
**FORGOTTEN MEN**  
*The Famous War Film*

**MANY HUNDREDS OF  
UNPUBLISHED PHOTOS**



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# Leaves from the Editor's Note-Book

John Carpenter House, London, E.C.4

**H**ARDLY ever, in the whole course of my long editorial experience, have I received so constant and substantial a "fan mail" as is now flowing in day by day from the readers of I WAS THERE. One publication that was certainly comparable in its postal response was my other very successful war book, *World War, 1914-1918*. When that was in course of publication, soldiers of every rank wrote by the hundreds, and even by the thousand by the time the publication of the Parts was complete. But a new feature, and an even more humanly pleasing one, is the personal recognition of faces and figures in the pages of the present work.

**R**ECOGNITIONS of faces in the pages of I WAS THERE are, in fact, coming in from all quarters, both from men who have survived the four years of fighting on the various fronts under varied conditions of horror and excitement, and also from relatives of many who were killed. A very characteristic letter, from one of the former class who recognizes himself as a recruit in "civvies" in Part 7, is the following from Mr. John W. Bunting, of Staveley, Derbyshire, who won the Military Medal. He says:

"It is with great pleasure that I write to you as one 'who was there,' having served from August 28th, 1914 to March 13th, 1919. It may interest you very much to know that I look forward each Tuesday to the I WAS THERE publication.

"You will perhaps be further interested to know, that upon looking at the photograph in this week's 7th Part of your publication on page 264, depicting 'Kitchener's Men,' I was very much surprised to recognize my own features, with others of my own Company, in the back row. How well I remember that hot sweltering day in Sept. 1914, when we were on parade at Aldershot—'Kitchener's Men' awaiting inspection by the late King and Lord Kitchener. I recognized with great pleasure

and delight quite a few of my old pals, some of whom, alas, lie in a corner of a foreign field that is for ever England.

"It may interest you to know that I also recognized a chum who was shot dead by a German sniper on the evening of November 16th, 1915.

"What a shock it gave me on Wednesday morning after recognizing my old pal, to find it was exactly 23 years ago to the date of his death. Talk about coincidences if you like, but this is remarkable—truly the old saying, truth is stranger than fiction, is certainly correct.

"I may experience further shocks while perusing the contents of I WAS THERE in the forthcoming weekly parts.

"I served nearly three years in France and Flanders and spent the last six months in captivity with the Germans, suffering from poison gas, starved, bullied and beaten until I left Germany on November 23rd, 1918.

"I compiled my own War History, mostly in diary form; my P.O.W. experiences, partly from memory and partly from scraps of paper, make interesting reading.

"I look forward with great interest each week to your publication, although A.R.P. work takes up some of my time. Anyway, sir, here's wishing your publication every success, and I may add that it will find an honoured place on my bookshelves."

**W**HEN I arranged for the photograph which appears in the last page of Part 1 to be reproduced in the largest possible size, I did so because I felt that the major interest of all my readers in this photograph would be in its human appeal and the fact that a considerable number of the faces of this large body of men of one of the first detachments of the B.E.F., sitting at ease on the pavé of a street in an unnamed town on their way to Mons, would be recognizable to their friends and relatives. I have now received confirmation of the correctness of this idea. Mrs. Pollard, of Plymouth, tells me that the standing figure behind the piled rifles on the left-hand side of the photograph is that of her late husband, who was in the 2nd Battalion of the Worcestershires. She herself did not even know that his Battalion was on this line of route to Mons. Her late husband, Sergeant A. E. V. Liversidge (Mrs. Pollard married again after the War), served from Mons until October 12, 1918, when he was killed only a month before the Armistice.

[Continued in page iii of this wrapper





#### **WAIF OF THE DESERT WAS THEIR MASCOT**

There were no stray dogs to be picked up and made regimental pets and mascots in the desert campaigns, as there were in France and Flanders, but this soldier, in Mesopotamia, has found a four-footed friend in the shape of a small gazelle, deserted by its mother. At first it was so weak that it could not take food from a bottle. Its owner fed it by smearing milk on his lips and letting the gazelle lick it off. The little animal was fed in this way until it gained sufficient strength to drink from a bottle.



#### THE SCENE IS SET FOR THE FIERY FINALE

Early in January 1916 the evacuation of Gallipoli reached its last stage, and the remnants of the gallant British army left that land where they had fought and suffered through long, weary months. The whole operation was a brilliant piece of organization in which soldiers and sailors worked together with the utmost skill and courage. This photograph, taken on "W" beach, shows how stores were left behind and piled high ready for destruction by fire. While these last preparations were being made, Turkish batteries shelled the scene, and a column of water, flung from the sea, can be seen in the background where a shell has missed its mark.

*Imperial War Museum*

# HEROIC LAST DAYS of the ANZACS on GALLIPOLI

by General Sir John Monash, K.C.B.

ONCE the momentous decision to evacuate the Peninsula had been taken, great secrecy had to be maintained so that the Turks should have no inkling of what was contemplated. So well was the enemy bluffed that between December 10 and 20 no fewer than 83,000 men, together with guns and transport, were evacuated from Anzac and Suvla, and there were very few casualties. General Monash, then commanding the 4th Australian Infantry Brigade, tells the astounding story of this bloodless and silent retreat, which he reasonably enough considers to be 'the greatest joke—and the greatest feat of arms in military history.' The following description of the evacuation was written in diary form and sent subsequently to Lady Monash

Anzac, December 12, 1915.

LIKE a thunderbolt from a clear blue sky has come the stupendous and paralyzing news that, after all, the Allied War Council has decided that the best and wisest course to take is to evacuate the Peninsula, and secret orders to carry out that operation have just reached here. The secret is known so far to only a small handful of men, but there is no harm in my writing about it today because it will be very many days before this letter can be posted.

The first thing to do is to secure as great a measure of secrecy as possible. This operation of withdrawal is going to be every bit as critical and dangerous an enterprise as the first landing, and if the Turks were to get the slightest inkling of what was intended, it would mean the sacrifice of at least half our men. As it is, it will mean the sacrifice of some men, and of vast quantities of munitions and stores.

At a conference of the commanders it was decided to put up the bluff that, owing to the severe winter conditions, it is intended to form a winter rest-camp at Imbros, and take the brigades and battalions there by turn. In this way we should be able in two or three stages to remove about two-thirds of the total army, leaving the remaining third to man the defences very lightly, and then finally to make a bolt for the beach, in the dead of night and into boats which will be in waiting.

It is, of course, an absolutely critical scheme, which may come off quite successfully or may end in a frightful disaster. But orders are orders. I need not say I feel very unhappy. Being bound to secrecy, I can take none of my staff or C.O.'s into my confidence. I am almost frightened to

contemplate the howl of rage and disappointment there will be when the men find out what is afoot, and I am wondering what Australia will think at the desertion of her 6,000 dead and her 20,000 other casualties.

December 13. The move has already commenced. Tonight the whole of my 15th Battalion and about a hundred odds and ends are being taken off in barges. I am sending with them all the invaluable brigade records and a portion of my own baggage.

It is my intention, if left a free hand, to be the last man of the brigade ashore, and to see everybody safely off; but Sir A. H. Russell has told me today that, as I am second-in-command of the division, he will very likely decide for me to get away with the second last quotas, so that I can supervise the concentration of the division at whatever place we are going to.

## THE ENEMY DID NOT SUSPECT

December 14. About 600 of the 4th Brigade with all their impedimenta got safely away last night, although there was a half moon. I don't think the enemy could suspect any special activities out at sea, because for months all our moves, both inward and outward, have been at night. Today we are engaged in making away with all kinds of stores, grenades, bombs, picks, shovels, sandbags, food supplies, ordnance-gear, and everything else which we shall probably be unable to handle.

December 15. It is curious and interesting to watch the machine unwind itself as methodically and systematically as it was originally wound up. The supply of fresh meat and bread stopped a couple of days ago, and as reserves of these are being used up, we are all going steadily back to an emergency

diet of hard biscuits and bully-beef. All inward mails came to an end last week. The outward mail stopped yesterday, and all the postal organization has been disbanded.

Defaulters and men undergoing field punishment were released and returned to their units yesterday, and today the whole organization of the provost marshal will be dissolved, military police withdrawn, and men will rejoin their battalions. All men on detached duty, such as cooks, clerks, and telephonists, loaned to or borrowed from other units, are being released and sent back to their own commands.

From today the regular daily mule-train of supplies will stop, and the organization will be disbanded; after that it will be a case of fetching and carrying by hand, as we had to do in the first two or three weeks. My field hospital is packing up and flits today; after that it is good-bye to small medical comforts which a visit of inspection to the hospital always seems to materialize. Supply of firewood stopped yesterday, and with it collective cooking, so the men's camp mess-tins are again in evidence, and each man is again preparing his food for himself.

ALTHOUGH the move is still officially a secret, the men would be fools indeed if they have not already guessed what is in the wind. Yet, if you asked them, not a man would pretend that he suspected anything, and all ranks go about their day's work as if we were to stay there till the end of the war.

Later. A further long conference is just over. The actual date of the beginning of the move is not yet settled. It may be tomorrow or not for a week or more. All depends upon the weather and upon the state of the moon. Today there was a boisterous north-east wind, and the sea has come up very rough, making it extremely difficult to load baggage. The loading and landing officers today declared that we must all be prepared for the eventuality that the remainder of our baggage may have to be abandoned. This means that we shall be able to take away only what we can carry in our hands or on our backs. At a suitable place we have established a casualty clearing-station to accommodate 1,200 patients, with a full staff of doctors, dressers and hospital gear.

In case there is any heavy fighting during the final stages of the re-embarkation, all casualties will, as far as possible, be brought to this station and left there. The medical officers and personnel in charge will, of course, have to stay too. So they have been

provided with interpreters and with a dispatch addressed to the enemy commander, calling upon him to carry into effect the provisions of the Geneva Convention as regards taking over our wounded and Red Cross personnel and administering same. I have every confidence that, in such an eventuality, the Turks will play the game.

*December 16, 1915.*

**T**HE day passed quite uneventfully. We managed to get some baggage off today, as the wind has dropped and the sea is calmer. The total strength of Anzac has in the last four days been reduced from 45,000 to 20,000 and we shall continue to hold the lines against

at least 170,000 Turks (ten divisions) until the second last day, and on the very last day we shall have only 10,000.

Everything is working out, so far, most smoothly. Today, for the first time, I took my staff and commanding officers into my confidence, and explained to them the outline of the general scheme, and the particular rôle each would have to play. The rest of the day I spent in preparing a complete draft of my final orders.

**I**N view of the steadiness of the barometer, and the generally favourable conditions, it has now been decided to carry out the operation of re-

embarkation tomorrow and Sunday. Today, therefore, we had our final divisional conference, and took mutual farewells of each other. General Birdwood himself came over from Imbros, and specially picked my lines for a visit. He went along my whole line, and shook hands with all the officers and expressed the hope that they would come through alive.

I have already sent off about 800 of the brigade, tomorrow McGlinn goes with another 800, and on the last night I take the remaining 825. These, I have divided into three echelons or groups, the first 400, the second 255, the last of all 170—moving respectively at 6 p.m., 10 p.m., and 2 a.m.



#### **THEY SAID 'GERMAN NO GOOD'**

Guarded by but a single escort, seen in his sun helmet with fixed bayonet, three of the last Turkish prisoners to surrender at Suvla Bay are being taken off in a launch to the transport that will carry them to a prisoners-of-war camp. They are two privates and an officer, seen in the centre. The Turks were doughty but clean fighters. The officer during this short trip persisted in saying over and over again, "German no good," an indication that, in his opinion, German help had not availed them.

*Imperial War Museum*





#### **FLAMES THAT ENDED THE GALLIPOLI TRAGEDY**

Everything in the way of arms and equipment that could be destroyed before the evacuation of Gallipoli was rendered useless and everything that was inflammable was burned, but even so, as Marshal Liman von Sanders relates in Chapter 100, some valuable stores were left behind. These two photographs were taken on the last day before the evacuation, and on the night after it. In the top photograph hay and petrol are being placed among the boxes of stores in a dump at Suvla Point ready to be fired at the last moment. The lower one was taken from the deck of H.M.S. Cornwallis, seen also in page 534, after the evacuation. It shows a dump going up in flames.

*Imperial War Museum*



The last 170, or the "die-hards," have been chosen from the most gallant and capable men in the brigade. Even these will not all leave the trenches in a bunch, but a few of the most daring men, who are good athletes, will remain in the trenches and keep up fire for another ten minutes, and then will make for the beach at best possible speed.

I am myself going with the last group of the last 170, as by that time the die will be cast, and I can do no good by waiting for the last small handful.

The men, while very sad at having to give up the ground which has cost Australia so dear, are all very keen, and I am quite sure that not a man in the brigade will move from his post, no matter what happens, until the exact moment arranged for him to do so.

It has been worrying me to think that, if we get clear away without much loss, the enemy will nevertheless represent the incident as a great victory for them, even to the extent of alleging that there has been a great fight and that they have driven us into the sea.

So I made it my special business to explain my apprehensions to General Birdwood, and he has promised me that, as soon as possible after the completion of the operation, he will himself cable to Australia and New Zealand in order to allay public anxiety as to the welfare of the Army Corps.

Anzac, December 18, 1915.

Everything is going smoothly. The enemy is exceptionally quiet. A final conference today with my staff and C.O.'s Lieutenant-Colonel McGlinn left for the beach at three-thirty to make arrangements in advance for my quota of 800, which is leaving today, commencing at nine o'clock this evening. . . .

We have worked out a very clever device for firing off a rifle automatically at any predetermined time after the device is started. It is done by allowing a tin to fill slowly with water until it overbalances, falls, and jerks a string which fires the rifle.

I have had ten rifles fixed in this way, which will be started by the last men to leave, and will fire off respectively five, ten, fifteen and twenty minutes afterwards. In this way the enemy will think we are still in the trenches, after we have got over a mile away.

Anzac, December 18 (midnight).

The last party of the first night has embarked safely. I have just had a note from McGlinn, sent back by one of my police: "All O.K. Dined with M.L.O. Curried chicken washed down with Burgundy. Everybody feeding out of my hand." The interpretation of this message is that McGlinn has succeeded in getting off the last of our personal baggage, and that all troops have so far got away without loss.



#### GALLIPOLI 1915—LONDON 1938

Sir William Birdwood's term in command of the army in Gallipoli ended when Sir Charles Monro succeeded him to direct command at the evacuation, but to the end he commanded the Anzacs, the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps, whose great feat of arms is remembered through the British Empire on "Anzac Day," April 25. Above, General Birdwood, now Field-Marshal Lord Birdwood, is seen at Anzac, on December 19, 1915, just before the evacuation.

Below he is inspecting Jewish ex-service men on Armistice Sunday, November 6, 1938.

Photos, Imperial War Museum and Topical



This now leaves me with just what I stand up in, and only Locke, Firth (my new signal officer), and two signallers and two police at brigade headquarters, and 800 men holding my front of over a mile. Everything is normal, just the usual sniping, and occasional bombs and bursts of machine-gun fire. If we get through tonight, I feel sure that all will be well. My bed tonight will be a heap of old sandbags.

As to the "die-hards," a list has been drawn up of the names of each of the last 170 officers and men, showing for each man the exact time that he has to leave the front trenches, and exactly what he has to do—whether to carry a machine-gun, or its tripod, or its belts, or to throw a bomb, or to start an automatic rifle, or to light a fuse which will blow up a gun-cotton mine, or to complete a previously-barbed wire entanglement on a track which might be used by the enemy.

Every one of these 170 officers and men has been given a card, containing all these particulars so far as they apply to himself, and the exact route by which he is to reach the beach. All this means organization and makes all the difference between success and failure. I think now I had better try to get a couple of hours' sleep, as everything seems normal, and not more than the usual noise for this time of night.

*Anzac, December 19, 1915.*

NOON.—Last day on Gallipoli. Last night's moves passed off smoothly and without incident; everything satisfactory and well ahead of time. The weather today is absolutely perfect for our purposes, perfectly calm air and sea, cloudy, foggy and dull, with a very light misty drizzle, so that everything in the distance is dim and blurred.

8 p.m.—All going swimmingly and without a hitch. By this time the A parties of tonight will have got off.

At this moment there are not more than 5,000 troops in the whole of Anzac, thinly holding the front line against 170,000 of the enemy. If the Turks only knew it!

This afternoon the fleet carried out a most terrific bombardment at Helles, in order to suggest the idea that we are contemplating an attack.

It is clear, bright moonlight, but icy cold. One of our planes is buzzing overhead, mainly to keep any enterprising enemy plane from trying to be curious and see what is going on. The next hour or two will be decisive. The B parties start at nine-thirty and then there will be only a small handful left, but we shall have succeeded in with-

drawing the great bulk of the Army Corps without any loss, a wonderful piece of organization.

*December 20, 1915, 4 a.m.*

*(entering Mudros Harbour).*

THE last hours on Gallipoli were tense and exciting in the extreme. About nine my last patrol came in and reported that they could plainly hear the Turks digging and putting in wire on Hackney Wick and Green Knoll, two points at which my lines have been pushed out very close to theirs. This meant that so far they suspected nothing.

The last hours passed most wearily. Every crack of a rifle, every burst of rifle-fire, every bomb explosion, might have been the beginning of a general attack all along the line. By ten o'clock our final numbers had been reduced to 170 in the brigade, 600 in the whole New Zealand and Australian Division, and about 1,500 in the whole Army Corps, spread along a front of over eight miles.

This meant that if at any point along this great line the Turks had discovered the withdrawal of the garrison, and if only a few of our men had given way and allowed our lines to be penetrated, the whole of this last 1,500 would have had a very hard fight of it, and many would have left their bones on Gallipoli. As it was, the final withdrawal commenced at 1.35 a.m., when the balance of the machine-guns and the thirty men came out; at 1.45 a.m. another sixty, and at 1.55 a.m. my last man vacated his foremost position, leaving only the automatic devices working.

#### SINGLE FILE TO SAFETY

ALL other brigades and divisions were similarly timed according to their distance from the embarking piers, of which we had four. Down dozens of little gullies leading back from the front lines came little groups of six to a dozen men, the last (in every case an officer) closing the gully with a previously prepared frame of barbed wire, or lighting a fuse which an hour later would fire a mine for the wrecking of a sap or a tunnel by which the enemy could follow; all these little columns of men kept joining up, like so many rivulets which flow into the main stream, and so at last they coalesced into four continuous lines, one from the south, two from the east, and one (that is ours) from the north.

There was no check, no halting, no haste or running, just a steady, silent tramp in single file, without any lights or smoking, and every yard brought us nearer to safety. The heads of the four marching lines reached the Brighton, Anzac, Howitzer and North beaches

almost at the same instant, so well had everything been timed, and so well had all kept to the prescribed pace of three miles per hour; and then, without check, each line marched (like so many ghostly figures in the dim light) in single file on to its allotted jetty, the sound of marching feet having been deadened by laying a floor of sandbags; and so on to a motor barge ("beetles" we call them) holding 400.

#### 'AND SILENTLY STOLE AWAY'

ON to these, generals, staff officers, machine-gunners and privates all packed up, promiscuously and quietly. There was a short pause to make sure that no one had been left behind. Not a sound could be heard on the shore except the throb, throb of the beetle's engines, and on the distant hills the spasmodic rifle-shots of the enemy, discharged at our now empty trenches.

Then the landing and loading staff, chiefly naval officers, stepped aboard. "Let go all over—right away," was the last order, and slowly we moved out. Just before the barge at Anzac pier cast off, the last engineer officer on shore joined the terminals of an electric battery and thereby fired three enormous gun-cotton mines.

These, with a terrific explosion, blew up "Russell's Top," which was the knoll at the head of the western branch of Monash Valley, and which, though we could never drive the Turks off it, we had succeeded in tunnelling under. With the knoll a couple of hundred Turks must have gone up in the air, but nothing could be seen except a volcano of dust.

Instantly a most terrific tornado of rifle and machine-gun fire burst forth along the whole length of Sari Bair, showing that the Turks, far from suspecting our real manoeuvre, had been actually expecting an attack, of which they took the firing of the mine to be the first signal.

Thus, dramatically, with the bullets, aimed at our trenches, high up on the slopes and spurs of the range, whistling harmlessly overhead, we drew off in the light of the full moon, mercifully screened by a thin mist, and so ended the story of the Anzacs on Gallipoli.

WE had succeeded in withdrawing 45,000 men, also mules, guns, stores, provisions and transport valued at several million pounds, without a single casualty, and without allowing the enemy to entertain the slightest suspicion. It was a most brilliant conception, brilliantly organized, and brilliantly executed, and will, I am sure, rank as the greatest joke—and the greatest feat of arms—in the whole range of military history.



E. Stern-Bubarth

#### FANTASIA BEFORE BATTLE

These are men of the Beduin tribes fighting with the Turkish Army in Mesopotamia. One of the military exercises of these horsemen of the desert is a "fantasia," during which the men ride wildly round waving their rifles above their heads, firing random shots, and uttering piercing cries, the purpose being to work themselves up to a high pitch of excitement so that they may charge with greater élan. A fantasia, as seen in this photograph, also precedes a charge in real fighting.

# 'Sideshows' of 1915

April — May 1915

WHILE chief attention throughout the year 1915 was centred on the Western Front and the Gallipoli Peninsula many gallant deeds were being enacted in the minor theatres of War. ¶ In Mesopotamia both sides were striving for a rapid decision, and this section appropriately starts with the experiences of Oberleutnant Stern-Rubarth, who was A.D.C. to the German General Staff's Expedition to Iraq and Persia, 1914-15. ¶ From the British side Mr. Conrad Cato entertainingly describes the amphibious nature of the warfare in this theatre. The well-known author of "Bengal Lancer," Major Yeats-Brown, recounts his capture by Arab fanatics when he crashed in the desert. ¶ The campaign in German South-West when Botha captured the German capital and received the capitulation of the German forces is illustrated by two first-hand accounts by Lt.-Col. Trew and Mr. Deneys Reitz.

\* 102 April 10—14, 1915

## A GALLANT TURK in DEFEAT German's Memory of Mesopotamia

by Edgar Stern-Rubarth



A TURKISH OBERLEUTNANT

The author in Spring 1915, shortly before the "Battle of the Marne in Iraq," which he describes here. Like all German officers in the Turkish service, he is wearing Turkish uniform—that of a cavalry lieutenant with the insignia of a General's A.D.C. Many details of the dramatic event he relates here were hitherto practically unknown.

I WAS sent over to Turkey in October 1914, a few days before her official declaration of war had been made. It was some sort of a favour granted to me for a daring scheme which I had planned to blow up the Suez Canal, and which had been cancelled when Turkey officially joined the German-Austrian alliance. On my journey I had to smuggle a band of Mahomedan prisoners-of-war, taken at the French

front, through an unfriendly Rumania, disguised as a circus troupe.

It took a long time before our expedition reached the Mesopotamian front, where we had to fulfil a number of delicate and dangerous tasks. It was, however, practically impossible to get a free hand from Turkish headquarters, who were afraid lest the activities of "unbelievers" on holy soil should spoil their shaky relations with the Arab tribes. We were, therefore, officially embodied in the Iraq army, my commander as chief of the army's supplies and halting-places, my dozen comrades in similar "inoffensive" capacities, and myself as A.D.C. to the army's transport section.

IN fact, we acted as a sort of General Staff and were entrusted with the most difficult and, sometimes, apparently impossible tasks. The Commander-in-Chief, Sulaiman Askari Bey, a hero of the Tripoli and Balkan wars and close friend of Enver Pasha, a young and daring soldier, had been seriously wounded during one of the earliest phases of the British attack by a shell smashing his right knee. Medical science could not make him walk again; but Surgeon-Major Dr. Eddy Schacht, my comrade who had been made chief of the army's medical department when we took over its "commissariat," restored him as far as possible, and he had a stretcher made for himself, which could be erected into a chair—a slightly ridiculous and at the same time pathetic contraption of wood and red plush.

Since, in November 1914, the British Army under General Barrett had taken Basra and advanced to Qurna (where, according to the Arabs, the Garden of Eden was situated), Sulaiman Askari

had had reports from the front according to which the Arab tribes faithful to the Sultan-Caliph were expecting a Turkish counter-attack. Their frequent skirmishes with the enemy, in which only small Turkish detachments took a hand, had no effect on the situation; the C.-in-C. therefore decided upon a great attack to force the British forces to withdraw to the Persian Gulf and also to convince the Arabs of the valour and courage of the Turks. This, at the same time, would rid him of the permanent menace of a British break-through at Qurna, where the mines constructed by my comrade, Lt. Müller, and launched on the river again and again with great bravery, had thus far been the principal means of defence against the British armoured craft. Sulaiman's scheme was to turn the British left flank and to march through a hundred-mile stretch of desert south of the vast swamps of the Khor Hammar.

THAT march alone would have been a master stroke for a perfectly equipped army with a well-organized commissariat. For the available force of 12,000 men, with 36 antediluvian guns and practically no means for the transport of ammunition, food, sanitary equipment, forage, even water, it was a scheme bordering on folly. In numerous deliberations we tried to bring home these difficulties and especially the fact that everything had to be carried with the army, as no means for a line of communication with its base existed; but Sulaiman had only one answer: "If we fail, the Arabs will say 'Mektub' (It Hath Been Written), but if we neglect to try it they will take us for cowards and go over to the enemy!"





#### SERVING SULTAN AND KAISER

This is a small group of German officers who, attached to the Staff of the Turkish Iraq Army, played a rôle in the fateful battle of Shwaiba-Zubair, on April 12-14, 1915. In the first row, second from right, is seen the author, Dr. Stern-Rubarth, between two of his comrades mentioned in his report as orderly officers of the unhappy C-in-C.; behind, from right to left, are Dr. Schacht, Captain Uth, Commander Klein, Chief of the German Expedition. This snapshot was taken at the last halt before the march to Basra.

So we simply had to attempt a decisive victory within three days, which would permit us to live on in the conquered forts or city, or to look forward to complete destruction.

We were in no triumphal mood when we inspected the army finally assembled at Nassirijeh, at the last bend of the Euphrates before it joins the Tigris at Qurna, and dined with the C-in-C. for the last time in his tent. I made a sketch of his expressive if pock-marked face, and he signed it with a few words in Turkish: "If you should survive," he said to me, when handing it back, "please hand that sketch to my friend Enver Pasha with my best compliments, and tell him that I tried to the last to do my duty." When I said some cheering words, he smiled: "I am not afraid, my friend—but I am not going to outlive a defeat which will cost me my army."

**T**HERE was, however, a slight chance of success, for the British had thus far neglected the desert north-west of Basra and only fortified some old strongholds five miles north and north-west of the city, at Shwaiba and Zubair. Our regular army—which was to be strengthened by some 18,000 to 20,000 "Mudjahedin," religious volunteers of the Beduin tribes, as soon as the scene of the battle was reached—consisted mainly of one Anatolian infantry regiment, a battalion of the militarized

Sambul Fire Brigade, a battalion of "Osmanshiks," excellent volunteers from the former Turkish parts of the Balkans, and about 7,000 Arab recruits, mostly ill-trained, under Turkish officers. The artillery consisted of three good, if not entirely new, German 15-c.m. howitzers, three batteries of German field guns of medium calibre, and a number of older pieces. My comrade, Captain Uth, was made artillery commander, but was disabled at the beginning by a severe attack of typhoid fever. To make things worse, our three modern howitzers were more or less ruined when tried out near Nassirijeh with Bulgarian ammunition captured during the Balkan war.

**O**UR advance started on April 10, 1915. It took, for the bulk of the army, three days. On the 12th the minarets and palm trees of the "promised city" appeared in a blurred mirage on the horizon, and the first skirmishes of advance guards which had arrived on the previous afternoon, and enthusiastic Beduin partisans against British troops echoed in irregular volleys over the endless plain. Sulaiman Askari, aided by his Turkish chief of staff, Ali Bey, revised the plan of his attack and selected a spot some eight or ten feet higher than the rest of the plain, amongst a few shrubs of tamarisk, as his conning-tower. He had travelled in an old Viennese cab

arranged so that his stretcher could easily be moved in and out; on that bed of suffering he sat, a queer, pathetic figure, watching and directing the procedure.

A battalion of valiant, sturdy soldiers attacked the most advanced British fortification, inefficiently supported by the gunfire of the Turkish batteries which were themselves soon located by the longer ranging artillery of the adversary. Barely a thousand Osmanshiks courageously pushed on to the barbed-wire fences and obstacles in their way, disregarding the toll that guns and machine-guns exacted in their loosely-knit rows, always the goal—the fort—in their eye. And then, when they finally reached it, their primitive scissors proved insufficient for cutting the wire, good, three-string British make, for which the Turkish arsenals had not prepared them. . . .

**They ran into landmines which blew them up by the dozen, hanging in the air like gigantic bunches of grapes.**

**M**EANWHILE, with a far-away angry noise, the "Mudjahedin," the tribesmen volunteers, drove hundreds of bellums—long, slender boats somewhat resembling the Venice gondola—down the vast, lazy river, with a view to attacking the British forces from the rear. But neither the scheme nor their weapons were efficient enough to create as much as a serious diversion from the front, which in the meantime had rapidly developed into a real battle-field such as would have delighted the heart of every class-room strategist of fifty years ago.

For there was a cavalry detachment attacking with lances here, and a little

mound captured by infantry in long, loose waves there, a bayonet-fight near the barbed-wire fortifications, and a precise but ineffectual gunfire at another spot. And all that was visible from one point, the Turkish C.-in-C.'s hill, whither A.D.C.'s, Turks and Germans came and went in haste, bringing information and taking orders, and where a disabled man sat in a red plush chair. The precise British war reports registered the single events of this great fight, but I am afraid these were somewhat obscure for both sides on the spot, and especially so for the Turks and their leader who, with his field glasses, saw everything as if in a mirage. Indeed, there was a dancing mirage. The cupolas and minarets of the far-away city, the ships on the waters of the Shatt-al-Arab in the background, were sometimes visible above a hazy ground fog at an unnatural angle, and advancing troops were blurred out until they suddenly appeared nearly in front of us

**T**HE Beduins, who like skirmishing and are not afraid of a number of noisy volleys, were not accustomed to gun and machine-gun fire. Perhaps they had sized up the situation rapidly enough with that intuition given to primitive people; in any case, on the morning of the second day of the great battle they had disappeared—all but Sheikh Ajaimi Bey, supreme chieftain of the Muntefig, with about 1,000 or 2,000 of his faithful followers, better armed than the rest of the volunteers, who had come with guns of all ages and makes, often with not more than one or two dozen rounds of ammunition and no possibility of replacing the special make long saved for the great day.

Ajaimi, subsequently made Pasha by the Sultan, was a youngish, enthusiastic leader, well informed about the things of the world; he was keen on going, after a successful end of the war which should stabilize and increase the comparative freedom of the Arabs under Turkish rule, to Stambul and Berlin, in order to speak to the Kaiser and Hindenburg, and to see for himself the miracles of the Zeppelin and the "Big Bertha." He fought valiantly with his well-mounted tribesmen until the end and cursed the cowards who had deserted the cause of the Jihad, the Holy War—in order to watch our only line of retreat and to plunder the remainder of the Turkish army should it be beaten.

Notwithstanding some local success—Zubair and the ruins of Old Basra taken the first day were held—won against evidently increasing Anglo-Indian reinforcements, the second day of the battle seemed to spell disaster. The Turkish

trenches, extremely poor lines dug about 20 or 30 inches deep in the crumbling soil, often with a knife or a bayonet, as few spades were available, were swept by a heavy and persistent artillery-fire. Our guns could not reach their batteries; indeed it was feared that a number of the armoured gunboats from Qurna had been called down and, unseen and out of Turkish range, were playing havoc with us. Our ammunition was running low; the artillery commander got into trouble with Sulaiman each time the C.-in-C. ordered an intensification of the fire; he had lost already two mountain guns which had to be abandoned.

**O**NCE a large British force tried to out-flank us and was beaten back with heavy losses on our side, their machine-guns outnumbering ours many times; and again and again brave Turkish infantrymen, especially the Osman-shiks and the Pompiers, broke forward in desperate attempts—not at breaking

the enemy's lines, but at getting at them. The first-named battalion made not less than seven bayonet attacks, each time falling back after the loss of more than one-third of its remaining strength, until finally only a few handfuls, all wounded, were left at the last storm, and taken prisoners by the enemy. I was told—but unable to verify—that the British commander had sent them back under a white flag, with his compliments: "He did not want to make prisoners of such brave soldiers . . ." During all that struggle and the forced march from Nassirijeh the army had had nothing but "beksemet," crude, hard, Turkish ship's biscuit, "chubbes," the soft flat cakes of coarse millet which the natives bake on the heated mudwalls of a hole in the ground, and a few handfuls of dried dates, washed down with the brackish water carried from the swamps. And even these poor means of sustenance could but last until the third day. But Sulaiman, when it had been



**'THE COLUMN WILL ADVANCE!'**

Sulaiman Askari, C.-in-C. of the Iraq Army, the day before he started his daring attack on the British Army in Basra, inspected in the South-Mesopotamian desert his inadequate forces for the last time. He is seen, right, in a unique snapshot taken by a German staff officer, forcing himself to stand in front of his "stretcher-chair," notwithstanding his smashed right knee. Immediately behind him are his Chief of Staff and Artillery Commander.



#### WHY THE TURKS ATTACKED—AND WHY THEY WERE DEFEATED

The upper photo shows two Arab chieftains in their ceremonial robes paying a visit to Sulaiman Askari in his camp. They have come from Basra—in British hands—in order to emphasize the political necessity of a Turkish attack. Below we see a damaged German Krupp gun captured from the Turks during the battle of Shwaiba-Zubair; their attack broke down after three days of fierce fighting, mainly because of the insufficiency of their artillery and ammunition.



my duty to make that clear to him, said: "My soldiers can go hungry for days if that's what gives them victory; we have done it before, in Tripoli, at Kirk-Kilissé, in Gumuljina and elsewhere!"

**W**HAT finally brought about the catastrophe, when the Turkish army had more than held its own and indeed won a number of local advantages, was the complete falling-off of our artillery. On the third day, in the early afternoon, the commander informed Sulaiman that having fired his last shell he intended to withdraw with his guns, horses, carriages, so as to save them from being captured without a shot. Sulaiman was furious and desperate: taking the guns back would discourage the army and make it impossible to go on with the fight which, as the British in three days had not been able to repulse the attack, might still be victorious. But he had to give in to the arguments of his subordinate. With clenched teeth he sat in his chair, a ten-shot Mauser in his fist: whenever and wherever he discovered in the vast plain around him a soldier in retreat or seemingly willing to benefit by the withdrawal of the artillery in order to save himself, he shot at him. It must have cost him a terrible effort to realize finally that he was at his wits' end—that to go on attacking an enemy many times stronger than himself,

entrenched behind improvised fortifications, disposing of ample guns and ammunition, and backed by a fleet of armoured gunboats, would have been sheer madness. And so shortly before sunset on April 14, the third day of the battle, he ordered the general retreat.

Two of my comrades were with him at that fateful moment, a young, daring cavalry lieutenant and an elderly trooper, who had seen the Herero and the Boer wars in South Africa and had risen from the ranks. They had acted as his orderly officers; when he had his stretcher taken into his car and drove away to the north-west, they mounted their horses and followed the cab at a gallop. None of them knew that General Melliss, the British Commander under General Nixon, had practically at the same moment ordered the breaking off of the battle, and only when his scouts reported the general retreat of the Turks had given counter orders and engineered a half-hearted pursuit. . . .

. . . . A mile or two from the battlefield the two Germans, who had fallen a little way behind the car, in which the unhappy Turkish Commander sat alone and brooding, heard a shot. Rapidly pushing up the sides of the car they saw Sulaiman Askari sitting in his chair, his smoking Mauser still in his right hand, and a thin stream of blood trickling from his forward sunken head.

**H**e had done as he had foretold but a week before in his tent at Nassirijeh. His hastily prepared grave is somewhere in that dreary desert south of the Khor Hammar, sun-stricken, wind-swept, and unmarked—only a little way distant from the Paradise of the Turk's imagination. . . .

I brought, as promised, the portrait I had drawn of him to his friend and chief, Enver Pasha, whom a similar fate befell a few years later. But many more fights and adventures intervened between the battle of Shwaiba-Zubair and my coming back to Stambul. Five thousand of our twelve thousand regular troops did not return—fallen on the field, or died from wounds, hunger, thirst and the fatigues of the retreat, or treacherously murdered by the deserting tribes for their scanty belongings—a gun, ammunition, a pair of shoes, perhaps a horse shared by two or three of the wounded, exhausted men.

Notwithstanding many brave deeds—the destruction of the Anglo-Persian pipelines by two of my comrades at the time of the battle, later on the Turkish victory at Ctesiphon and the siege of Kut-al-Amara—the fate of the Mesopotamian campaign had been sealed at this Turkish "Marne."



# BLUFFING the TURKS in 'MESPOT'

## How a Force of 88 Took Amara!

by Conrad Cato (Cyril Cox)



HE SAW WAR IN A SWAMP

When Mr. Cyril Cox was placed on the retired list in 1927 he had completed twenty-three years service with the Royal Naval Reserve. During the war he was a Paymaster Lieutenant-Commander and he served in the sloop, the *Odin*, in the Mesopotamia Campaign from 1914 to 1916, the Aden Patrol, and later held a staff appointment at the Admiralty.

**T**OWARDS the end of May 1915 it was decided to attack the Turkish force above Qurna, which lies at the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates, with a view to a further advance up the Tigris. This force was estimated to be a little over three thousand strong, and it was entrenched upon various sand-hills and dry patches of ground in the midst of the floods. In these days, when we reckon the strength of armies by the million and casualties by the thousand, no one could be expected to take much interest in so small an affair. . . . For at that time Mesopotamia was regarded as only a small side-show, bearing no obvious relation to the rest of the war. . . .

**T**HE engagement above Qurna was remarkable for two things—the unique conditions under which it was fought, and the startling success of the British arms. The ground on which the village stands was a few feet above the level of the flood, but all around it, as far as the eye could see, was flooded marshland, dotted here and there to the northward with the small sand-hills in the occupation of the Turks. These hills had been christened with such names as Norfolk Hill, One Tree Hill, One Tower Hill, Shrapnel Hill, and Gun Hill. So inconspicuous are they in the dry season that a casual observer would imagine that the whole countryside was a dead level plain; but in the summer of 1915 their barren soil stood out clearly amidst an ocean of green reeds,

which grew to a height of five or six feet above the level of the water.

The depth of the flood varied considerably, but the average was probably about two feet, and it would have been quite possible for the infantry to wade through it, if the ground had not been intersected by numerous nullahs, or dykes, cut at right angles to the river for irrigation purposes. Most of these were too deep to be fordable, and so it was necessary to devise other means of enabling the infantry to advance.

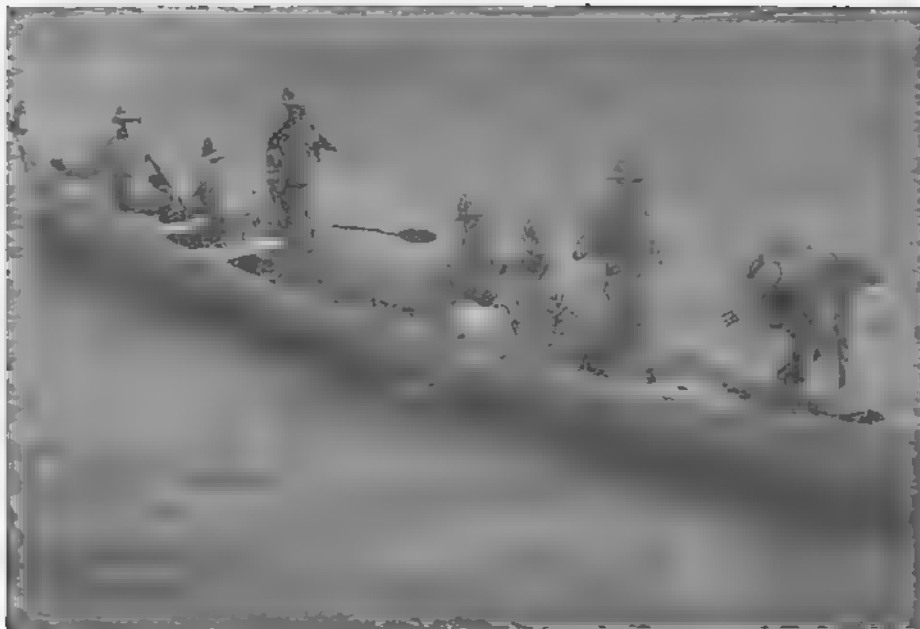
The Arab has invented a long narrow boat, which is eminently suited to navigate the swift current of the Tigris. He calls it a "bellum," and propels it in deep water with one oar and one paddle, and in shallow water with two punt poles. The bellum played a very conspicuous part in the engagement above Qurna. For weeks beforehand Tommy had been patiently learning the gentle art of punting, and studying how to avoid that distressing situation where the punter has to make up his mind whether he will say good-bye to his punt or to his pole. The sepoy also had been an assiduous student of the art; it was all part of the process of learning to think amphibiously. Then steel plates arrived from Basra, and a new weapon of war was called into being—the armoured bellum. . . .

**S**o the problem of creating an amphibious infantry had been solved. Next came the problem of the artillery, and it is not an easy matter to make a 4·7-inch gun into an amphibious monster. The best we could do with it was to mount it in a barge, and get a paddle-steamer to tow it upstream to wherever it was needed. It could then tie itself up to the bank and get to work. This sounds all right in theory, but in practice there were one or two serious obstacles. In the first place, a barge is a low-lying craft, and the gunner cannot

see his objective over the top of the reeds. In the second place, when the aeroplanes have helped him to find his range, he cannot be sure of keeping it with any exactness, because his barge has a trick of recoiling after every round. The artillery did not take at all kindly to amphibiousness.

**T**HEN there were the mountain guns, which scorned anything so commonplace as a barge, and invented a craft all their own. They got the idea from the children in the kindergarten, who fold bits of paper and make all sorts of wonderful things out of them; the most wonderful of all was the double canoe, consisting of two very angular boats joined together along the beam like a pair of Siamese twins. Take two bellums and place them alongside each other; then fix a wooden platform athwart the pair of them amidships; on the platform mount your gun, and, in order to protect the gunners from a blazing sun, build over them a pergola with frame of wood and roof of matted reeds; and there you have the recipe for the amphibious mountain gun. It is artistic if it is nothing else. In the stern sheets of each bellum stands the gondolier with his punt pole, and by dint of much practice the two gondoliers learn to punt in blissful harmony. The troubles of the mountain gunner, however, were the same as those of his big brother the 4·7. In a forest of reeds his fire was indirect, and his platform was unstable as a wayward minx.

Fortunately, the tale of the artillery is not yet completed. We have yet to reckon with the naval guns. Three sloops and a small flotilla of armed launches took part in the engagement above Qurna and to them, at any rate, the presence of water everywhere brought no difficulties or embarrassments. They had bridges and foretops from which their gunnery could be controlled, and



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in the case of the sloops the guns were at a sufficient height from the water to enable the gunlayers to see what they were aiming at. Their gun platforms, compared with those of the 4-7's and the mountain guns, were the essence of stability. It is true that their masts and funnels afforded the enemy a splendid mark for range-finding, but, fortunately, the Turkish gunnery at that time was poor; and although the ships were hit occasionally, there were no casualties and no material damage.

It was one of the naval guns which at a range of something over 8,000 yards sent a shell right into the embrasures of a Turkish gun, which had commanded the village of Kurnah and the straight reach of river running past it. The gun was silenced, for all its crew were knocked out, and so an unmolested advance up the river was secured as far as Snipe Camp, about two miles above the village. This was the naval programme—to concentrate on each battery singly, and so silence them one after another.

Meanwhile, the infantry were to advance through the reeds in their armoured bellums, and at the appointed times were to land on the various sand-bills and rush the enemy's trenches. The only thing which went wrong with the programme was that, except on Norfolk Hill, the Turk would not wait to be rushed. The deadly accuracy of the artillery upset his nerves badly and, if he saw no chance of skipping back out of harm's way, he resorted to the white flag.

This was not like the Turk, for usually he hangs on to his trench with



#### ARAB GONDOLAS AS DESERT TRANSPORTS

The Arab native boats, known as "bellums," formed a valuable means of transport for the British Army in Mesopotamia, as "Conrad Cato" states in this chapter. In the top photograph British soldiers are learning to navigate these craft, which require skilful handling. In the lower photograph bellums are seen crossing the flooded desert during the attack on Khaba, when they carried a part of the British force. When the water became too shallow for paddling, officers and men waded, pushing the boats before them.

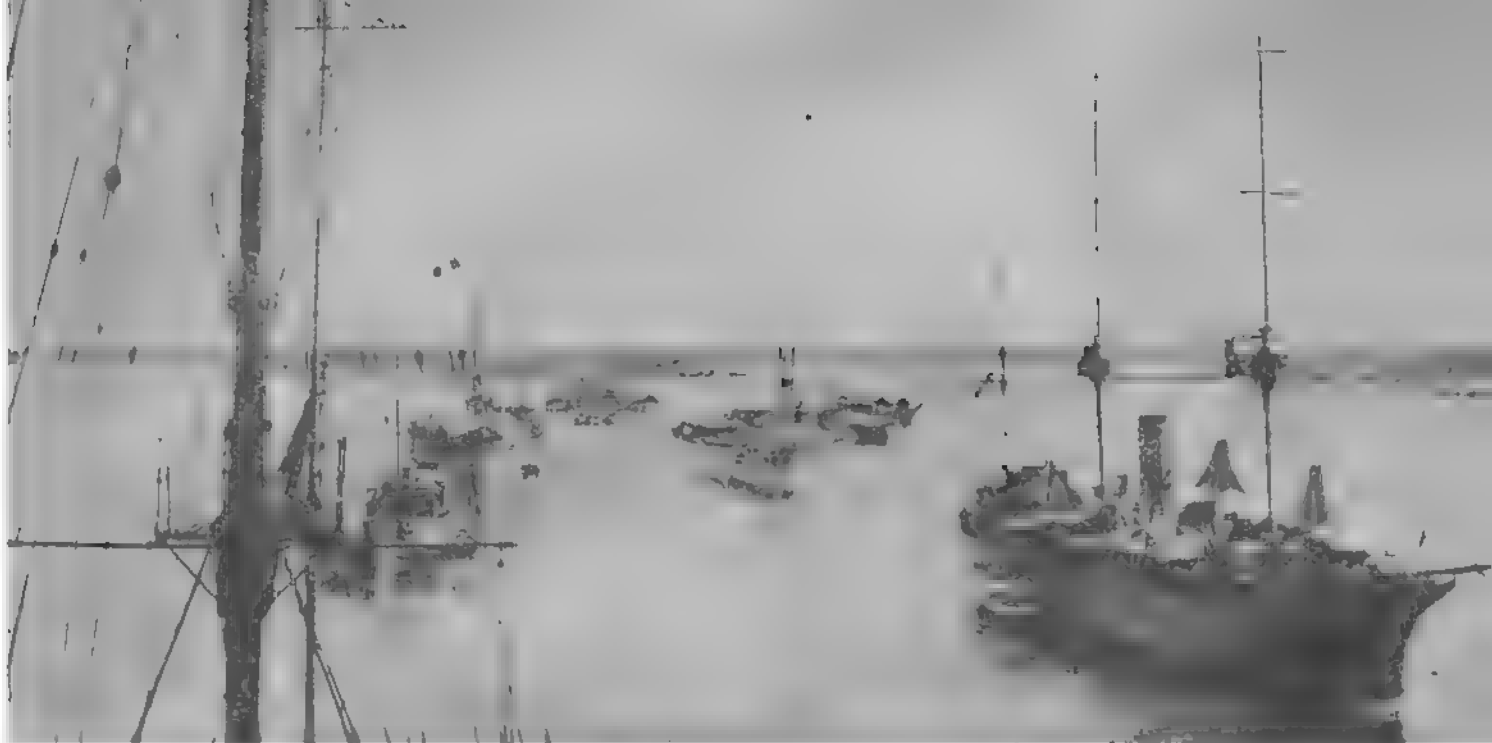
the tenacity of a badger in a hole. But the naval guns, after they had silenced all his batteries, got the range of his trenches and adjusted the time fuse to a nicety, so that life was really not worth living in those trenches. The battle started soon after five in the morning, and by noon some half-dozen of the Turkish positions were in our hands, together with a fair number of prisoners and quite a useful haul of material. This completed the General's programme for the day, and the afternoon was spent in burying the dead beneath a blazing sun, while the shade temperature registered 110° F.

Next day the aeroplanes brought word that the Turks had abandoned the rest of their positions, and were in full retreat up the river in steamers, barges, and maheilahs, and then the whole British force began to move forward in pursuit. Now watch the procession as it files up the Tigris. First two armed launches doing duty as minesweepers, with a wire hawser towed between them; then the sloops, which look like giants amidst this motley assembly of river craft; after them more armed launches. Then come the stern-wheelers carrying the infantry, who have now abandoned their armoured bellums. It is a queer-looking craft, this stern-wheeler, something like a two-storied wooden house with an old hay-making machine at the stern, kicking up the water high into the air with as much grunting and groaning as though a

spavined horse was setting the wheel in motion.

BESIDES the stern-wheeler there are the Irrawaddy paddlers, and the Indus tugs, and the steel barges of the Supply and Transport Corps; but all these are prosaic compared with the hospital maheilahs [river craft with mast and sail] and the mountain guns with their double canoes and pergolas of green reeds.

Darting in and out among the fleet are the motor-boats which carry about the staff officers and other important persons. There is something



#### A STRANGE FLEET IN BEING

about the whole scene which brings back memories of Henley Regatta, with its houseboats, its river steamers, its motor-launches, and its decorated pleasure craft.

But the enemy is in retreat, and where are the cavalry? Now, it is useless to argue with the cavalry. When they say that they cannot learn to think amphibiously, they mean it, and there is nothing more to be said about it. Their argument is, of course, that the horse is not an amphibious animal, and there is a good deal of truth in it.

**B**UT the General is never nonplussed by these trifling limitations. If the horse is not amphibious, at all events the Navy is versatile, and when it has finished playing the rôle of artillery it will turn joyfully to the rôle of cavalry without requiring any rehearsals. All the rest of the story of the advance from Kurnah to Amarah is purely naval history; for the Navy now leaves the Army behind—all except the staff officers who find accommodation in the sloops—and goes pounding up the Tigris, past Bahran with its mud forts, past the attempted obstruction near Rotah Canal, past the remains of the Turkish camp at Mazeebla, round the Peardrop Bend, and into the then unknown reaches of the river.

The enemy had a long start, but his steamers were heavily laden and were towing barges full of infantry, and his maheilahs stood no chance in a race with steam. Bit by bit the distance between pursuers and pursued grew narrower, and just before sunset the enemy came within range of our guns. As the sun dipped below the horizon

Part of the curious medley of craft described in this chapter is here seen at anchor on the broad waters of the Tigris. A notable feature of the larger vessels is the elaborate wireless aeriels, for in a land without telegraph or telephone systems wireless was the only means of communication. During the campaign the Inland Water Transport Service greatly improved the navigation of the river by dredging, and eventually steamers of considerable size were able to ascend as far as Bagdad

and the sky was suffused in a soft glow, the guns began to bark from the leading armed launch, which had been ordered to proceed to the head of the flotilla and to look out for mines. Soon after, the thunder and flame burst from the Senior Naval Officer's ship, which followed a mile or so behind.

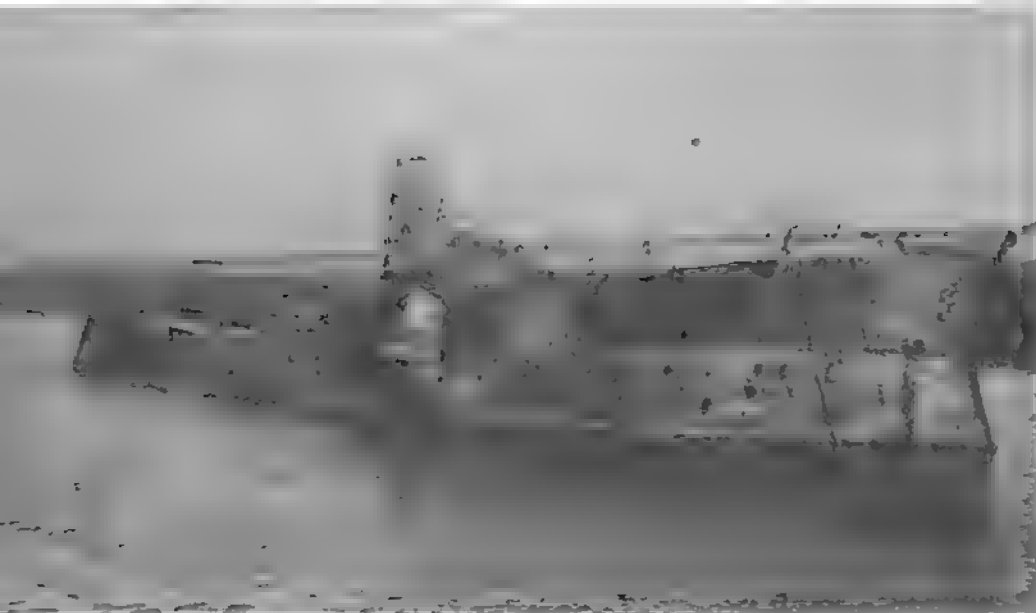
In a wilderness of green marshes the silver windings of the Tigris showed up clearly in the evening light, and the pursuing ships forged ahead at a steady pace, ever mindful of the chant which came from the leadsmen in the chains. In the distance were the white sails of the fugitive maheilahs, like the wings of frightened swans, and in front of them the desperate little steamers were struggling to tow their barges laden with Turkish infantry. Ahead of them all was the Turkish gunboat Marmaris, bound on her last run for safety, and knowing in her sorrowful heart that she could never reach it.

**W**HEN the brief twilight had faded away, and darkness enveloped the whole scene, our guns still went on spitting fire, although their targets were fast becoming invisible. But it was needless, for the fugitives had realized that the game was up. The maheilahs lowered their sails, and those of the steamers which had not been sunk by gunfire drew sullenly to the bank, and waited for their captors to come up. . . . The last to abandon hope of flight

was the Marmaris. She had left all her companions behind and disappeared into the darkness. But we knew what water she drew, and we knew roughly the depth of the river, so we did not worry about her. We also knew that she had some holes through her side, and probably some wounded men aboard her, and that probably her captain would have only one thought in his mind—how to render his ship beyond repair, so that she could be of no service to her captors. Presently a flickering light shot up from across the marshes, and as it grew it revealed the dark outline of a ship some five miles away round a bend of the river. The Marmaris had found salvation in harakiri; her crew had set her on fire, and encamped on the river bank until such time as H.M. Navy should offer its hospitality to them. . . .

**N**EXT day saw the innings of the armed launches, for they alone can now continue the pursuit up the river. One Turkish steamer laden with troops has yet to be accounted for. All the rest of the Turkish force is at Ezra's Tomb under the custody of the sloops, until such time as the Army can come up and take charge of the prisoners. At daybreak the armed launches get under way, the most commodious of them finding accommodation for the Senior Naval Officer and the General, with a small personal staff.





#### HERE, A SHEER HULK, LIES THE MARMARIS

The last phase of the amazing pursuit of the Turkish flotilla up the Tigris (see page 551) is seen in this photograph. It shows the Turkish gunboat Marmaris after the action. During this very successful pursuit, besides the sinking of the Marmaris and two steamers, the British flotilla captured three other steamers, two motor boats and some barges. Nearly 1,800 officers and men were taken, besides a large quantity of small arms and ammunition.

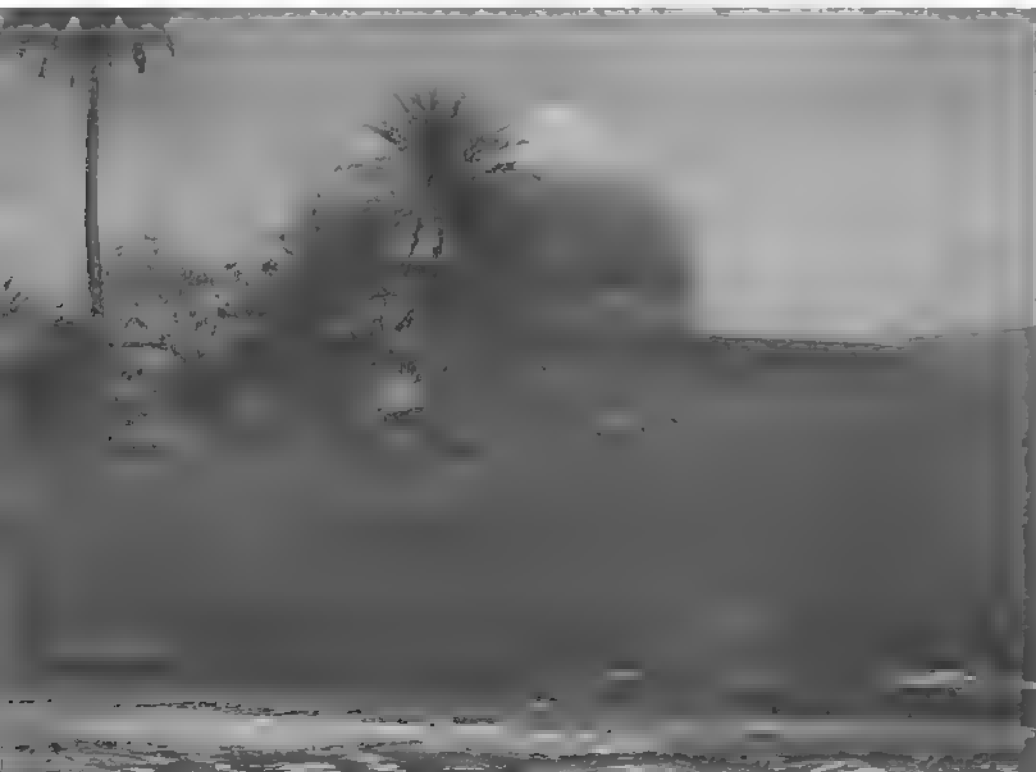
They go pounding on through the Narrows, past the village of Kulat Salih and into the broader water above, until the General begins to grow nervous.

"We really don't know what we are up against," he reminds the S.N.O.; but the S.N.O. is a born optimist, and all he says is: "I think we will just go round the next bend." By steadily continuing the process of going round the next bend, they find themselves waltzing into the town of Amara.

Ahead of them is the launch Shantan, but she is too intent on retrieving the lost lamb to feel any curiosity about this quaint-looking town; so she goes on plugging away at her best speed right through Amara into unknown regions beyond, until in due course she overhauls the runaway, and induces it without much argument to return with her downstream. Some hours later she re-enters Amara in triumph, and hands over another big batch of prisoners. Meanwhile the rest of the flotilla

#### WHERE THE TURKS FROM QURNA WERE ROUNDED UP

It was at this spot on the banks of the Tigris that the bulk of the Turkish force defeated at Qurna was rounded up while the enemy flotilla was being pursued up the river. It is known as Ezra's Tomb, for, according to Jewish tradition, the scribe was buried there. There are now a shrine and a blue-domed mosque on the site. The prisoners taken at Qurna numbered about 250. The rest of the Turkish army was in flight towards Amara.



have come to anchor and are admiring the picturesque features of the town, including the Arab ladies drawing water from the river in kerosene tins. The S.N.O. is saying affably to the General, "So this is Amara," but the General is busy thinking. The total British force at the moment, counting in all the crews of the launches, the General, his staff, and a dozen privates, amounts to eighty-eight officers and men. So the General says the time has come to find out what they are up against.

A NAVAL lieutenant is sent ashore in a skiff with six Tommies, and he makes straight for the Turkish barracks, where he finds quite a lot of soldiers, such as one often does find in barracks. He seeks out the commanding officer and asks him how many men he has there. The number was between 400 and 500. "Is that all?" asks the naval lieutenant. "Then tell them to pile arms and fall in on the river-bank. They will be stowed in barges and sent down the river at the first opportunity." Now, the commanding officer does not know that the total British force at Amara is only eighty-eight, nor that the British Army is at least twenty-four hours behind the Navy. All he knows is that he has seen a steamerload of discomfited infantry tearing up the river with an armed launch in chase, and that armed launches have guns. So he deems it wise not to argue the point. His men are told to pile arms and in due course are comfortably stowed away in barges. And that is the story of the taking of Amara.

THE Sub-Lieutenant of the Thora was temporarily in command of one of the launches, and was ordered to take a bargeload of prisoners alongside him, and to mount guard over them. His launch had a crew of Lascars, and the only white man besides himself was a private in the Royal Marine Light Infantry, who constituted a small but dauntless bodyguard. The Sub also had a revolver and a deck-chair, both of them useful articles in an emergency.

The night was divided into watches of one hour each; while the Sub paced the deck, revolver in hand, the private slept peacefully in the deck-chair, and then after an hour the positions were reversed. But, if the truth must be told, they were mighty glad the next day to see the first of the river steamers bringing up the Army. So was the General, and so were all the officers of H.M. "Amphibious Cavalry"; for those Turks were beginning to think that they had been bluffed in a most ungentlemanly way.

# I SAW the ENEMY'S FLAG HAULED DOWN

With Botha in German South-West

by Lt.-Col. H. F. Trew

*THE author was Commandant of General Botha's bodyguard during his victorious advance into German South-West Africa. In this chapter he describes the final march to the German capital of Windhoek, the surrender of the town and its occupation by Botha. The staunch and kindly character of the great Boer general emerges triumphantly in Colonel Trew's narrative*

**W**E left Swakopmund about 7 a.m. on April the 26th, and as we trekked along could hear the guns booming at Trekkoppies. The general [Botha] and staff did a quick ride out, and caught us up at Husab that night. We left Husab the following afternoon, and arrived at Riet about midnight. From there we trekked by night through Salem to Kaltenhausen.

A peculiar incident had occurred at this place a short time before the advance began. A party of intelligence scouts had camped there for the night. They next rode into Salem on bare-back horses, stating that their camp had been charged by German cavalry in the early morning, and they had barely escaped with their lives. A commando was sent to investigate, and found the deserted camp with saddles and blankets all over the place, and the spoor of a troop of quagga running through it.

We reached Kaltenhausen at midnight; it was bitterly cold and our transport with food and blankets was far behind. I was trying to get some sleep between two small fires when the general's batman, Johnston, came up and said, "Would you like a drop of old French brandy, sir?"

"**WHERE** did you get brandy?"

"Well, sir," was the answer, "I always carry a flask of it in case the general is taken poorly." I honestly think that brandy saved me from an illness, and can never be grateful enough to good old Johnston for his happy thought.

On this night march the general had a very narrow escape from an enemy mine. We were riding along a path which passed through a narrow neck in the hills. The general was riding in front with the staff, followed by the Bodyguard. We were just clear of the neck when the whole landscape was lit up by a bright flash, and an appalling explosion occurred behind us.

The general sent an officer back to see if anyone had been hurt. When he returned he reported that a Kafir servant had been trying to catch a loose horse which had put its foot on the pin of a mine and had been blown to pieces. The Kafir, who was fortunately some distance off when it exploded, was unhurt. I shall never forget the general's heartfelt reply, "The hand of God is surely with us." How the hoofs of one hundred and twenty horses had passed over that pin without touching it was a miracle.

## ONE SENSE LACKING

**O**NE thing that amused us all through this trek was the methodical manner in which the efficient German engineers had reversed all the sign-posts along the various roads. We soon perceived that they were very bad at finding their way about on the veld, in fact, the burghers said that if they shot the Hottentot guide who was with each German patrol, the other members of the party would have to surrender, because they would not be able to find their way back to camp. After a fight in the bush the night was always made brilliant by the German Very lights, which were fired from their camp to collect the stragglers. Intensive civilization seems to dull that sense in a human being which enables him to find his way about in unknown country.

When I speak of the commandos it is to be understood that they were not composed of men descended only from Dutch ancestors; there were a number of men of English descent on their nominal rolls. The prevailing language spoken, however, was Afrikaans, but it was impossible to distinguish between the different races in the ranks. The great thing was that they were all good South Africans, united by a common purpose; a happy augury for the future.

It was a peculiar pleasure to me to serve with the Boer commandos. I

had fought against them in the Boer War, and had respected them as worthy foemen. Now it was intensely interesting to serve on the same side, and observe their methods. I formed the opinion that they are the finest irregular mounted troops in the world. Their wonderful mobility, quick eye for country, capacity to undergo hardship, and individual initiative are admirable.

**I** FOUND that General Botha, who had always worked under the commando system, failed to realize that it was impossible for regular units trained in drill and discipline to get under arms and out of camp as quickly as a commando. The pace of a regular unit getting out of camp and on the move is the pace of the slowest man. The order is given to saddle up; when all the horses are saddled the troops or squadrons form up on their parade ground, and not until the whole regiment is reported present and correct do they move off.

The pace of the commando, in a hurry, is the pace of the quickest man. The commandant blows a whistle and gives the order to saddle up. As soon as he and his staff are ready he moves off on the line of march; the slower men, as they successively get saddled up, gallop after the commando and take up their proper places in the ranks.

Towards the end of the campaign I had to adopt the commando method with the Bodyguard, particularly as I often got very short notice when we were to move. The general was so secretive about his movements that often the first intimation I got that we were going to trek was when Johnston was seen saddling up his horse. When we halted I sometimes asked the general how long our stay would be, and very seldom got a definite answer.

**T**HE general rode every foot of the way to Karibib, as no motor-cars were taken on this trek. How he kept it up was remarkable, particularly as he was not really fit at this time. He had dismounted from his horse one day and was sitting on a camp stool with his leggings off. I noticed that his legs seemed very swollen and remarked on it. He said, "I am not well, look here," and with that he dug the point of his finger into his calf. It made a hole nearly an inch deep, and he remarked, "That hole will not fill up for a quarter of an hour." His courage was remarkable, and I think it was only his presence right up with them that encouraged his men to make the efforts they did.

From Kaltenhausen we moved to Otjimbingwe, where there was an old



#### STEEL LINES OF ADVANCE

The only swift means of transport for the South African troops invading German South-West Africa was by railway, but the Union system fell short of the frontier by many miles. A line had to be constructed from Prieska to Upington on the Orange River, a distance of 142 miles, and thence to Kalkfontein, 172 miles. The two sections were completed in a remarkably short space of time, and on the latter a record was created, 54 miles of track being laid in one day. The photograph shows work in progress on the Kalkfontein section. The crossing of the Orange River is seen in page 559.

*Imperial War Museum*

mission station. On the north of the river, in an open plain, were set a number of small rocky kopjes; the Germans tried to make a stand here but were quickly galloped out of them by Brits' men. The German forces were roughly handled, and a good many prisoners were taken.

**W**E here found quite good grazing, and a splendid water supply. Of course the grass was brown in colour, and short. On May the 2nd we moved to the Pot Mine Farm, and there had a most enjoyable rest for two days.

While we were here General Smuts arrived by motor-car for a conference with the commander-in-chief. He had come through by motor-car from Swakopmund along the northern railway line, via Ebony and Usakos. This was the first news we had received that Skinner's force had occupied Usakos, where there were important railway workshops. General Smuts was looking well, and was as energetic as ever.

By the general's order, two chairs were placed in the orchard, and there the two great men sat and compared notes. General Smuts lunched with General Botha and staff, and then set off on his long journey back.

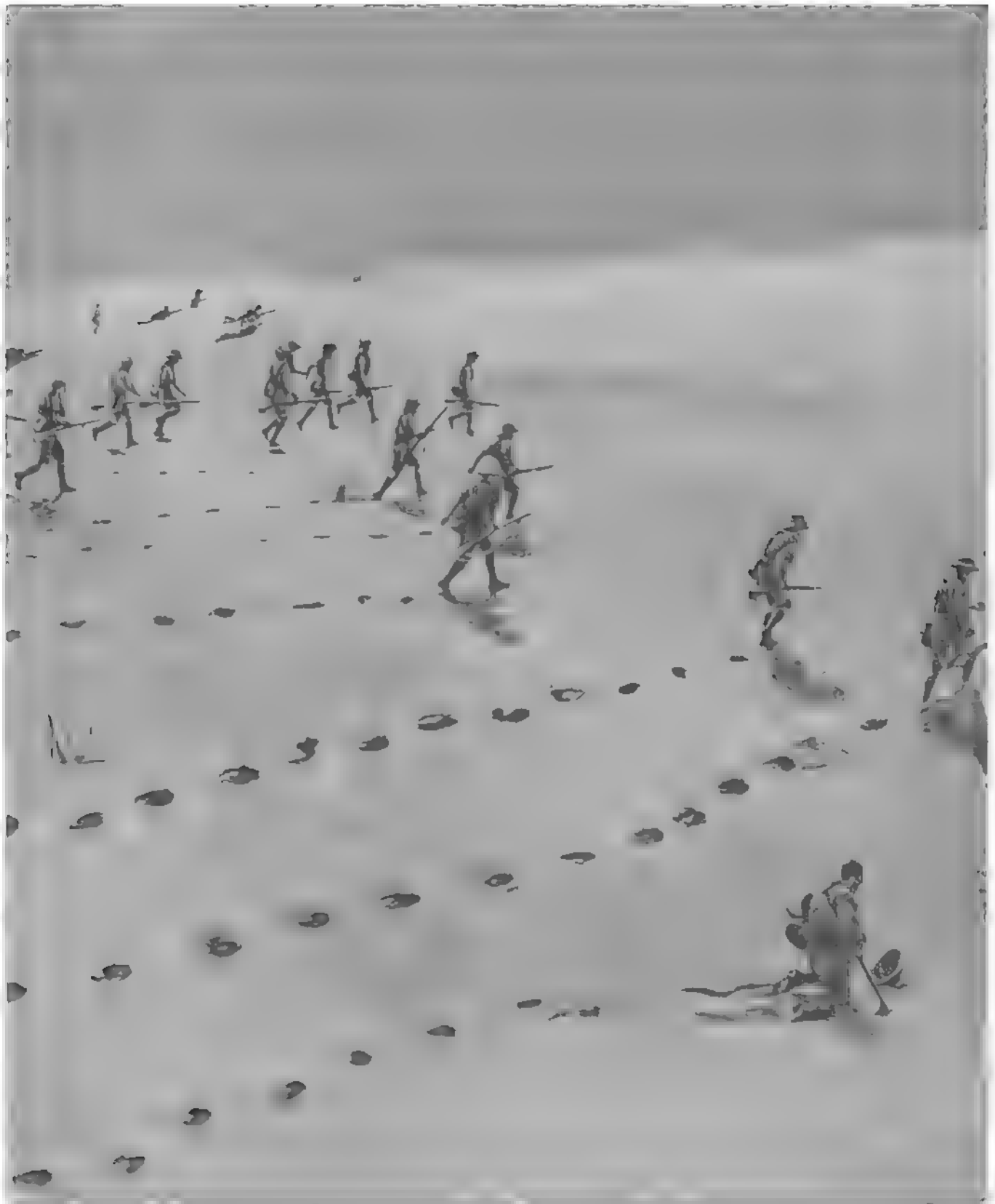
#### GEN. SMUTS HAD TO WAIT

**I** HEARD a good story afterwards about this trip from the Imperial Light Horse. It appears that the Germans vacated Usakos one morning, and the I.L.H. took over in the afternoon. That night one of their outpost sentries saw a man creeping towards him. He challenged, and received the answer, "Friend." Just then he saw a second figure join the first, and became very suspicious.

"Who are you?" he asked. The reply was, "I am General Smuts, Minister of Defence for the Union." "Oh, really," said the sentry. "Who is your friend?" "This is Sir William Hoy, the General Manager of Railways for the Union," was the reply. "That's a likely story," said the sentry. "The Minister of Defence and General Manager of Railways creeping about in the desert at this hour of night! You wait until I get my officer to have a look at you!"

General Smuts commended the sentry for his vigilance. It appears that he and Sir William were scouting up to Usakos, as they did not know if our troops or the Germans were in possession of the village. General Smuts took great chances, for they only had one small automatic pistol between them, and Sir William was no fighting man. We left Pot Mine Farm at midnight,





#### WAR ON THE SANDY WASTES OF SOUTH-WEST AFRICA

The extremely difficult nature of the country over which the operations in German South-West Africa were conducted is well shown in this photograph. The desert belt of Namaqualand, consisting of bare rocky land with wide stretches of sand, had to be crossed. It formed part of the Great Kalahari Desert. Here South African troops are advancing towards a German position over one such waste. The man on his knees in the foreground has been hit, and bullet furrows are visible behind him.



#### **MEN WHOM THEIR KING DELIGHTED TO HONOUR**

That much coveted honour, a command to Buckingham Palace, came to many of the wounded soldiers in the hospitals in and around London from the early days of the war. Wearing their hospital blue, the men were brought by cars and motor buses to the Palace. Above is the scene at a big tea party held on March 21, 1916. Every detail for these parties had been thought out, and many willing helpers, among whom were members of the Royal Family (see page 575), saw that every man was well looked after.



**SITTING DOWN TO TEA AT THE PALACE IN MARCH 1916**

L. N. A.

Throughout the war King George V and Queen Mary most strictly observed all the food restrictions and the utmost economy was maintained in the national interest, but for the wounded men there was no stint of good things. It was the great desire of the King and Queen to do even more for the wounded and to convert Buckingham Palace into a hospital. After a careful survey, however, it was found that the cost of the extensive structural alterations necessary rendered the plan impracticable.



#### **VICTOR AND VANQUISHED AFTER A GREAT CAMPAIGN**

By the beginning of July General Botha's masterly campaign in German South-West Africa came to a close, for the German governor of the colony, Dr. Setz, and the commander of the German Army, Lieut.-Colonel Francke, realized that further resistance was hopeless. On July 9 the terms of surrender were signed at Kilo on the railway line between Otavi and Khorab. Above are General Botha, right, and Lieut.-Colonel Francke, left. The German commander and his staff were put upon parole provided that the place of their residence was approved by the South African Government. He is here seen signing a promise to take no further part in the fighting between the British Empire and Germany.



behind Brits' commando, marching on Karibib. Between us and Karibib stretched a high range of mountains. General Botha had given General Brits orders to seize the pass through which the road ran as soon as possible, as he wished to helio to General Myburgh, who was operating on our right. When we reached the pass the general was furious to find Brits' force off-saddled at the foot of it.

He ordered me to take the Bodyguard up, and seize the pass. We were going off at a trot, when he ordered me to gallop. All the way up I expected to hear a mine go off, for it was rocky on each side of the road and we had to keep on it. However, we were lucky. For some reason the Germans had not mined it. When we reached the top we could see the German scouts galloping back into Karibib, which lay some five miles away. To the north of the town big dust clouds were rising, and this was their main body retiring.

When old Oom Koen came up the pass he seemed quite disappointed that the police had escaped being blown up. I think the old gentleman fully expected the pass to have been mined; hence his delay at the foot of it.

We entered Karibib that evening, and

the general immediately issued stringent orders against looting or interfering in any way with the inhabitants. I would like to remark here that the conduct of the Union troops in the towns they occupied was remarkably good, and that as a result the Germans soon showed no compunction in leaving their women and children to our care.

#### TRAIL OF RETREAT

**W**E now found that though the main body of the troops of the German southern force had escaped to the north, it had been such a close thing that they had been obliged to abandon a number of troop trains on the railway running from Karibib to Windhoek via Okahandja. The only demolition they had time to complete was a railway bridge east of Karibib.

The staff took up their quarters in an abandoned hotel, and the general in a private house near to it.

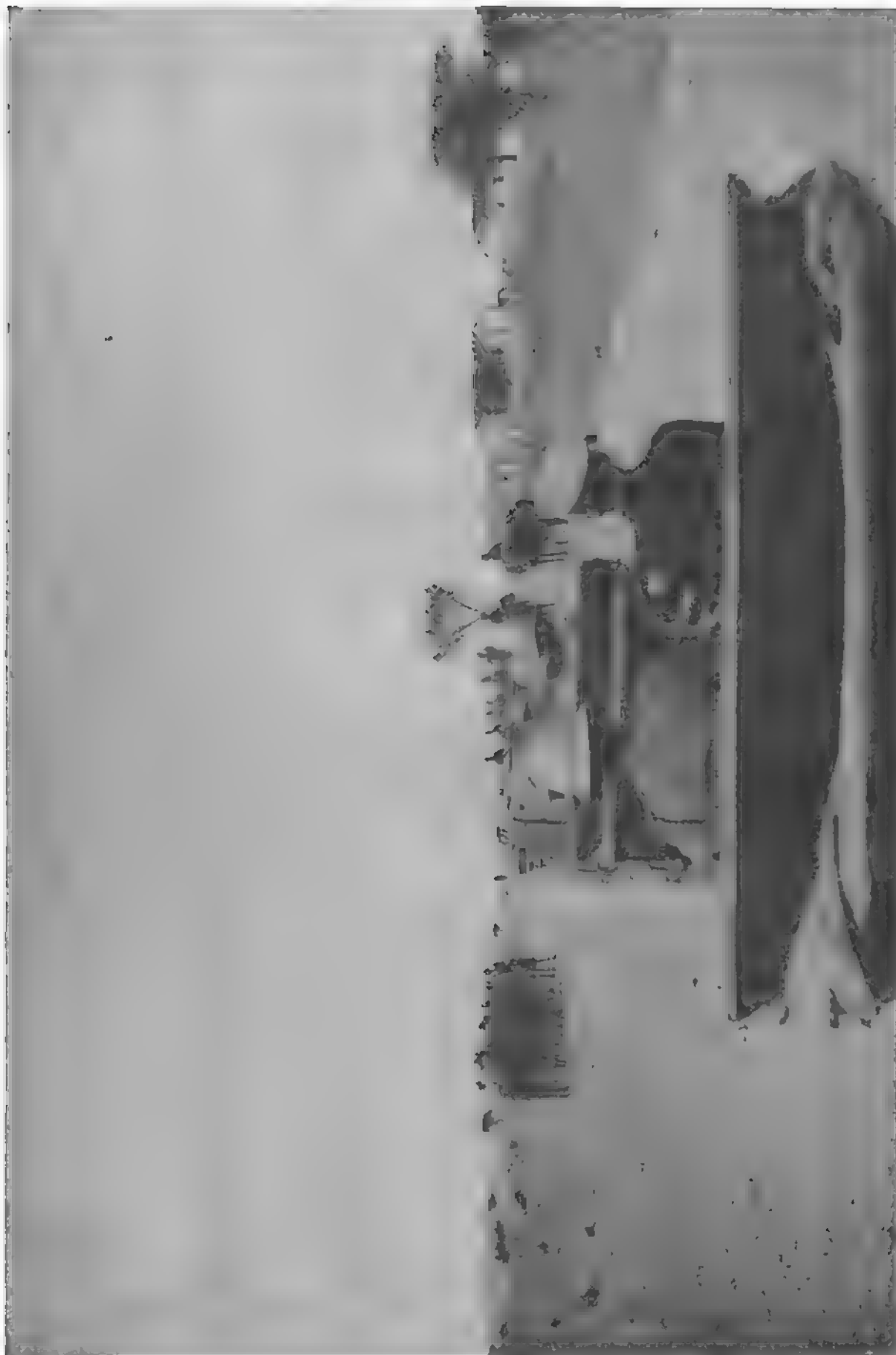
An amusing incident took place at the Bodyguard camp next day. The men had pitched their tents in the yard of the German police barracks. The German sergeant-major's wife was in possession of the married quarters, and had stored about twenty buckets full of water on the veranda. There was a well and windmill in the yard, but as there was a flat calm it was not working. The Bodyguard cook stole two of these buckets of water, and the lady unfortunately caught him in the act. She seized a large mop and pursued him, amid the applause of the men. He dropped the buckets of water and fled, but catching his foot in a tent rope fell at her feet. She immediately began to belabour him with the mop. Sergeant-Major Rourke, who was an Irishman, afraid that she might injure the cook, asked her to desist. She turned on him and said, "My husband is a brave man, he will kill you all. He is a bitter-ender,

#### THE TRUCKS WENT ACROSS TWO BY TWO

The extension of the railway through Bechuanaland to German South-West Africa, seen under construction in page 554, involved the crossing of the Orange River at Upington, and even at that point it is a considerable stream. Below is the scene before the river was bridged. A slipway has been constructed on the banks of the river down which trucks are lowered on to pontoon ferries, two of which are seen a few yards from the bank. It was a laborious process to ferry trains over the river as only two trucks could be taken at a time.

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#### **LAST PHASE IN GERMAN SOUTH-WEST BEGINS**

The start of General Botha's campaign in German South-West Africa was delayed by the outbreak of a rebellion among the Boers, and it was not until that had been quelled that an advance could be made. It began early in January 1915, and so rapid was the progress that on May 12 Windhoek, the capital of the German colony, surrendered. In the photograph, cars and mounted troops of General Botha's victorious army are waiting to enter the capital.

he will never surrender." "No, neither would I, if you were my wife," said Rourke quietly.

The infantry, who had been moving up from Jackalswater behind us, now arrived at Karibib. They had done some wonderful marching, and were bitterly disappointed at not being opposed.

We now received news of the sinking of the *Lusitania*, and of the anti-German riots and destruction of German property in the Union. I have never seen the general so angry as he was at the latter news. He said, "I hate mob law, it is always cruel, cowardly and unjust. What have the unfortunate German citizens in the Union to do with the policy of the German Government on the High Seas? If the cowards want to show their disgust at the sinking of this steamer, let them enlist and go to France."

#### ON THE MARCH TO TRIUMPH

THERE was a rumour that night that some of the infantry were coming in to wreck Karibib. However, the general saw their officers, and they exerted their influence on the men and quietened them down.

We heard that the Germans had now made Grootfontein, to the north of us, their new capital. Karibib was made Union army headquarters, and the railway was pushed through from Swakopmund. All preparations were made for a fresh advance to the north, and the repair of the demolished railway bridge was undertaken.

The South African Mounted Rifle Brigade under General Lukin had now joined up, and was stationed at Usakos.

On May the 11th the general left Karibib by motor-car to demand the surrender of Windhoek, which none of our troops had yet entered. As he did not know if the intervening country had been cleared of German troops, he took with him, in cars, a detachment of the Bodyguard and two maxims of the 4th S.A.M.R. We camped for the night in the thorn bush at Oaksise, where we were joined by Generals Myburgh and Koen Brits.

WE were a cheery party round the camp fire that night; besides the three generals, there were present Colonel Collyer, Lieut.-Col. de Waal, Major Bok, Major Leipoldt, Major Esselen, and myself. We rolled up in our blankets on the ground for the night, the general, as a great luxury, slept on his motor-car cushions.

In the very early morning we all got up and started to try to improve our appearance for the official entry into the enemy's capital. Brits and Myburgh were trimming their beards with scissors;

Collyer was shaving, with his mirror hung on a thorn bush; others of us were polishing boots, leggings, spurs and belts. General Botha awoke and sat up in his blankets yawning. Suddenly a look of amused surprise came into his eyes as he took in the scene, and he said in a sad tone: "Oh, the poor German women."

A formal summons to surrender was sent in to Windhoek under a white flag. The answer was received, and the procession of cars drove on to a ridge, covered with scattered thorn bush, which gave us a good view of the town. The German flag was still flying over Government House, but as we watched, it came slowly fluttering down.

The commandos who had lined each side of the road as we approached, now formed in column behind the cars.

The burgomaster and town clerk of Windhoek arrived to meet the general and made the formal surrender. We looked at them strangely, for they were the first clean, well-fed men we had seen for some considerable time. In their beautifully laundered white suits and white helmets they looked very spruce. They then left, and after a short interval the procession entered the town.

#### BOTHA'S SQUARE DEAL

THE general proceeded to the Rathaus and took up his stand on the veranda overlooking a large public square. The commandos filed in, and lined three sides of the square, and what a fine sight they made. Their ponies, tired and dejected, with all their ribs showing, the men in the saddles thin-faced and gaunt, bearded and dust covered; but their eyes were bright and so were their rifles. A thrill of pride ran through me as I looked at my fellow South Africans, and thought what they had suffered and endured in the few short days since they left Swakopmund.

The inside of the square was packed with the inhabitants, anxious to hear from the commander-in-chief's own lips what their fate was to be. At a given signal the Union Jack was run up to the top of the flag-pole by the sergeant-major of the Bodyguard, and the troops presented arms.

General Botha then made his speech. He told them that if they were well behaved and obeyed the regulations he would make, they had nothing to fear. There would be no looting nor would any of his men be allowed to enter a private house. They could sell food to the troops, but no food would be taken by force. Colonel de Waal and I now left to search for quarters where the general and staff could be billeted.

We found a large hotel and procured quarters there. As we had not tasted alcohol for some time we wandered into the bar and asked the barmaid for two whiskies-and-soda. "Whisky kaput," was the reply. "Well, brandy." "Brandy kaput." "Beer?" "Beer kaput." Then we asked, "Have you anything to drink?" "Yes, arrack."

"Well, give us two arracks and soda," we said. I had never tasted the stuff before, and I never want to again. It certainly had a kick in it, for we both nearly passed out.

The general gave a dinner that night at the hotel to celebrate the occupation. The two generals and all the staff were present. We introduced Oom Koen to the arrack, and he appeared to like it; no one else could touch it.

AS we were sitting at dinner a tall, good-looking lady, in evening dress, sailed into the room and took a seat at a table near us. We all gazed at her spellbound. We had seen nothing so beautiful for months. She looked so white, clean, well turned out, and utterly desirable. After dinner we sat in easy chairs smoking on the broad veranda. The lady sauntered out and sailed past us, taking a chair at the other end of the veranda. She was smoking a cigarette in a long amber holder, and I noticed that the waiter had managed to get her a liqueur from some hidden store.

General Myburgh got up and said: "Come along, Trew, let us improve our German."

General Botha said: "Remember, I will not have that lady annoyed in any way."

#### AN ENGLISHWOMAN'S TRIUMPH

WE walked over to her and both bowed, and Myburgh wished her good-evening in German. She turned on us and said: "I do not wish to speak to you gentlemen, but if you must speak to me do so in English, not in bad German." I then congratulated her on her good English accent. She replied: "I am English, and probably speak the language a great deal better than you do." She then told us that her husband was a German artillery officer, and that we brutes had wounded him at Gibeon. She went on to say that, being English, she knew how land-hungry that nation was, and that we were only fighting because we were greedy and wanted to rob the Germans of their farms, and that she hoped we would not force our hateful presence on her again.

We bowed, and returned to the general rather crestfallen. As Myburgh passed Botha, the latter murmured: "Not much success, I gather, Myburgh."

# I JOURNEYED into GERMAN WEST Amidst Hideous Danger of Mines & Thirst

by Lt.-Col. Deneys Reitz

Minister of Agriculture, Government of South Africa



## OLD AFRICAN CAMPAIGNER

Lieut.-Colonel Reitz's career as a soldier started when he fought in the Boer War as a boy of seventeen. During the Great War he served in the German-West and German-East African campaigns, and afterwards went to France, where he was severely wounded in 1918. He now takes an active part in public life as a Cabinet Minister in the South African Government.

**G**ERMAN WEST is a very large territory. It stretches from the Orange River to the Cunene, nine hundred miles north, and from west to east it lies between the Atlantic Ocean and the Kalahari Desert, a width of four hundred miles. Much of this vast space is arid, so the moving of troops was by no means an easy matter, and if the Germans took to guerilla warfare, as we had done against the British long ago, they might easily involve us in a long and inconclusive campaign.

Both Smuts and Botha were alive to this danger, and they were determined to prevent it.

As a preliminary, General Smuts had sent Sir Duncan McKenzie and eight hundred horsemen towards Gibeon, to cut off the retreat of the German forces operating in the south, and he was making ready to march the rest of his army into the hinterland.

To that end we busied ourselves with preparations. In our immediate vicinity the enemy had withdrawn shortly before, but they had left many unpleasant tokens of their occupation, for we discovered that they had mined the roads and the railway track, and had planted mines at random in the open veld, and in dwelling-houses, stables, and kraals, and they had poisoned the wells. As far as the wells were concerned we could not complain, for warning notices had been left, but to bury infernal machines in a place they had given up was new to us.

I made early acquaintance with one of these mines, and it cost me the life of my horse Bismarck. I was coming from the railhead one morning and overtook an infantry company plodding along. I rode chatting to the officer at their head when suddenly there was a roar in the midst of the soldiers and a column of smoke and dust shot a mile high, whilst fragments of metal went whizzing in all directions. When the air cleared, two men lay dead and a dozen wounded, and many others were temporarily blinded by the spurting sand. My horse, stung by flying grit and pebbles, reared and plunged, and when I dismounted to help the injured, he gave a snort of terror and, wrenching free, headed for the waterless desert that lay westward for a hundred miles and more.

By the time we had made the wounded men comfortable, and I had procured another horse, Bismarck was a mere speck on the distant horizon and he was steadily making deeper into the sandy waste. I followed him for hours, for I hoped to save him from the certain death from thirst that awaited him, but in the end the animal I was riding gave in and I was obliged to retrace my steps on foot, leading him behind me, and when last I saw my poor misguided horse, he was still going to his doom.

**W**HEN I reached camp, and Ruiter [his servant] heard of Bismarck's fate, tears ran down his ugly wizened countenance, for he loved the horse even more than I did.

Two days later I witnessed another explosion. I was standing in the street at Aus when again there came the report of a mine. The roof of a neighbouring stable was lifted bodily into the air, followed by the carcass of a mule, and an officer fell wounded to the ground. The mine had been set beneath the stable floor, and the mule had touched it off. Similar occurrences

were comparatively frequent. One of our men turned the handle of a door in a dwelling-house, and was blown to pieces. Another, who lit the wick of a lamp suspended from the ceiling of a room, met with instant death, and in the north General Botha's troops had many losses of the same kind.

One evening, riding down a gorge near Kanus, we came on a grisly sight. Swaying from a branch of a tree were the mummified bodies of three Hottentots. They had been hanged here by the Germans some time before, to judge by their condition, but for what offence I never heard.

## THE LONG, LONG TRAIL

**B**y this time General Smuts was anxious for news of Sir Duncan McKenzie's column that had disappeared into the void, and he ordered James Leisk and me to ride after them. Leisk in civil life was a highly-placed government official, and we were old acquaintances.

I had two horses left, one for myself and one for Ruiter, and Leisk was also well mounted. We set out at once, our road running through wild country, sparsely inhabited by nomad Hottentot tribes. Occasionally we found a dead horse or mule to show that McKenzie had gone by, but we travelled nearly a hundred miles before we came on a few of his men, left behind at Bethany Mission to look after the weaker animals. They had no news and we pushed on. Game was not plentiful, but there was an occasional antelope to be shot, and we had no difficulty in finding water. We went by Wasserfall and Besondermaid to the Great Fish River, and thence up past Bukaross Peak, through the Berseba Reserve. On our fourth day, at Deutsches Erde, we struck an outpost. They said they had heard the sound of distant gunfire during the night, so we hurried forward and towards noon came up with McKenzie and his



men in possession of Gibeon Town. He had got astride the Northern railway line just too late to cut off the German retreat, but he had fought a sharp rearguard action, in which he had captured some guns and a hundred and fifty prisoners, as well as several trains and large quantities of war material. He lost twenty-six men killed and fifty or sixty wounded, and the German casualties were about the same.

After some days Leisk and I, and a Colonel Muller, were assigned two motor cars that had accompanied the expedition, and were instructed to go north towards Windhoek, to establish contact with General Botha's troops, who, if they had not already taken the capital, must be nearing it by now.

**W**e reached Marienthal by the end of the first day, and here we found a picket of McKenzie's men that had pushed forward. They warned us to go carefully. Somewhere ahead, they said, the German force that had escaped was slowly falling back, blowing up the railway as it went. We started at dawn. From Marienthal the railway runs through the Reoboth Reserve, a huge area inhabited by a race of half-breeds. It is a sterile, barren tract, across which probably no motor cars had ever ventured, and we had a trying time. We ploughed all day through heavy

sand and blazing heat, until, by evening, we had used up every drop of water in quenching our thirst and in providing for the radiators. We moved parallel to the railway line, and at every station the boreholes, wells, and tanks were dynamited. Therefore, when at last we were brought to a halt for lack of water, we were in a serious predicament.

#### NO WATER FOR 80 MILES

**T**HERE WAS no open water that we knew of within eighty miles of us; the cars were dry, and so were we, and we spent an anxious, thirsty night. At daybreak, after trying in vain to extract some water from a destroyed borehole, we were lucky enough to find a patch of Tsama melon growing in the veld. In these parts the game and the natives rely almost entirely on this species of cucumber during the dry season. Liquid is extracted by gently heating the melons, and we were able to distil enough water for ourselves and the radiators. We moved on, but saw no more Tsama that day, and by noon, owing to the intense heat and the heavy going, the

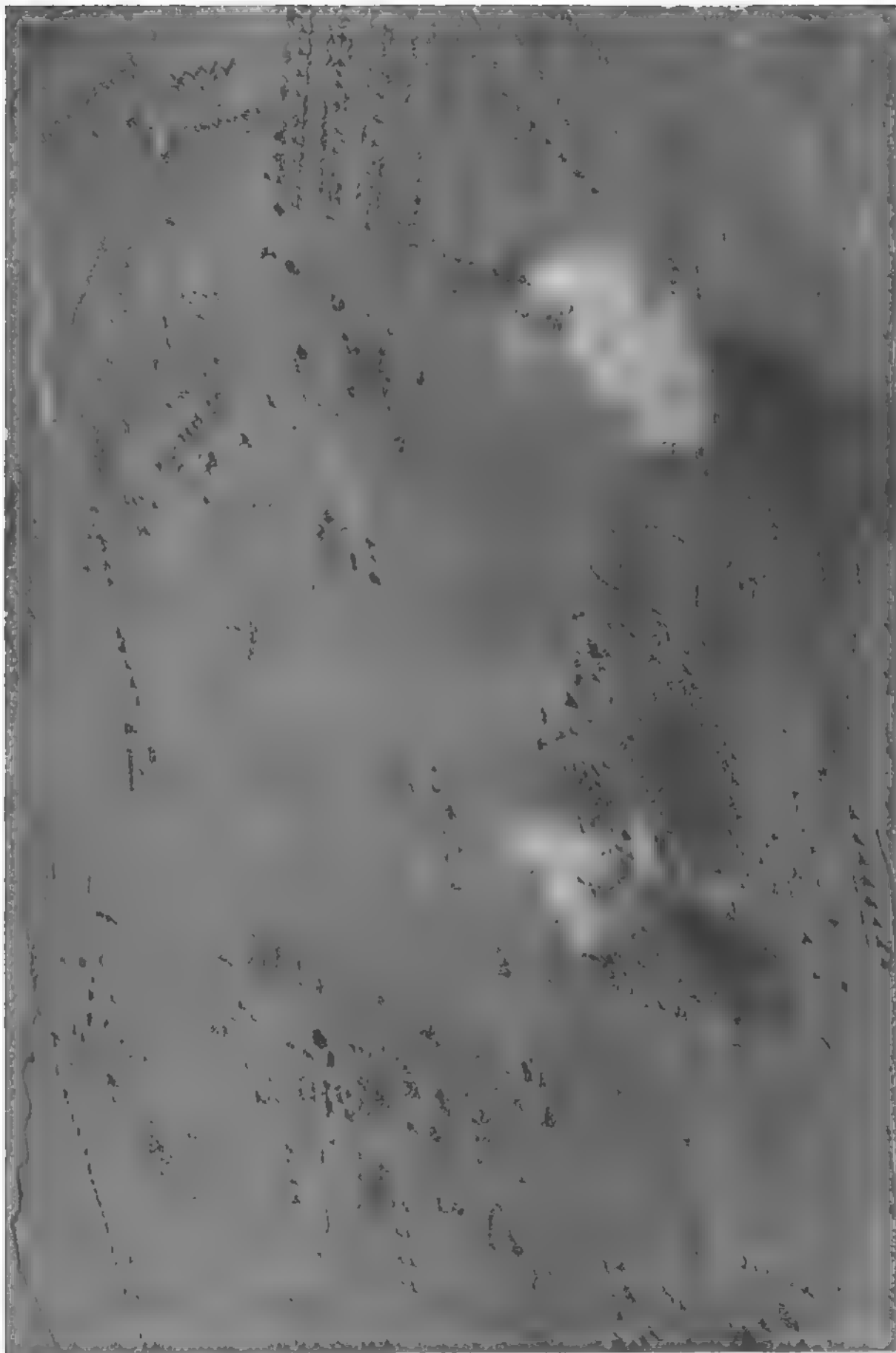
cars gave out for the second time. We calculated that we were within walking distance of Reoboth Station, which by our map lay somewhere ahead, so we abandoned the cars and went on foot. The sun beat down; our drinking water was finished, and this knowledge made us the more thirsty. In our heart of hearts we felt that our chances of finding any water at the station were remote, seeing how thoroughly the Germans had destroyed the wells and boreholes which we had discovered up to now, and we tramped along the railway track in gloomy silence. At one spot we passed two lonely graves. On each headstone was the name of a German soldier with an inscription "hier erdurstet," to show that they had perished of thirst on some bygone patrol, and this did not raise our spirits.

**A**FTER three hours, our tongues swollen with thirst, we came to a place where the railway line had spanned one of those waterless river beds that intersect the country at frequent intervals. The bridge had been dynamited, and on the

#### TREKKING ACROSS THE DESERT IN RAILWAY TRUCKS

The invasion of German South-West Africa was made from the sea as well as from the land. On Christmas Day, 1914, the South African Forces occupied Walfisch Bay, and on January 14 they took Swakopmund. Walfisch Bay was infinitely better as a base than Swakopmund, and the construction of a railway connecting it with the existing railway system was completed within a month. The railways in German South-West Africa, however, afforded no luxurious travel, and officers and men travelled together in open trucks such as these





Imag. Bureau

#### **BOMBS FROM THE BLUE ON BOTHA'S UNION FORCES**

The invasion of the German colony of South-West Africa by the South African troops was but one of the several smaller campaigns that followed in the train of the major conflict. It opened on Christmas Day 1914, and early in February 1915 Union forces under General Botha moved rapidly forward. This photograph, taken by a German airmen, shows bombs, dropped from his machine, bursting on a British camp in the occupied German territory. From the start the enemy forces faced a hopeless task, and on July 9, 1915, they surrendered.

audy course below were two engines piled one upon the other, a mass of twisted wreckage. The Germans had mined the bridge, and then run the engines over. As we stood gazing at them I caught a shimmer through the torn side of one of the boilers. We scrambled hurriedly down, and found a supply of water, providentially unspilt, in a corner of an engine tank. There was enough and to spare, and in a moment we were ladling out long satisfying draughts.

When we had finished drinking we were new men, and still further in luck, for, climbing a rise, I saw the buildings of Rheoboth Station a mile or two beyond. Cheerfully we filled our bottles and an old bucket picked up near by, and walked back with sufficient water for the cars. By 10 o'clock that night we had reached the station with both machines. We slept till morning, and then inspected our surroundings. Here again the water supply had been completely demolished, but again we were fortunate. The tanks and boreholes were destroyed, and the rolling-stock standing on the line had been set on fire, but a little square-bellied engine, in a shed by itself, had been overlooked, and its boiler was filled to the brim with clear, cool water. This freed us

from further care, for we knew that we would be running out of the desert beyond this point. From the trampled spoor around the station buildings, and from the general appearance of things, we concluded that the Germans had now abandoned the railway line, and were continuing their withdrawal by road. And on looking north-east, along the way they had gone, we could see a tall pillar of dust where their column was trekking fifteen or twenty miles away. They must have left in a hurry, for considerable quantities of stores and military kit were strewn about, and although the wells and water-towers were destroyed, the burning of the rolling material was incomplete.

#### IN HOT PURSUIT

As the railway line runs straight from here to Windhoek, sixty miles off, we argued (correctly as it proved) that General Botha must have occupied the capital, and that these troops, having got wind of his arrival, had swung east to avoid capture.

After we had satisfied ourselves of this, we continued our journey, through improved country, which enabled us to make better progress, though the going was still heavy. Far away to our

right moved the dust cloud of the retreating Germans. We could make out a convoy of wagons escorted by infantry, and about two hundred horse-men, and this was the nearest sight I got of the enemy in South-West

TOWARDS evening we ran into the mountains around Windhoek, and before long we met a picket of General Botha's men. They said the town had surrendered, but the bulk of the German forces had retreated north into the wilds. We entered after dark to find the streets swarming with South Africans, some riding about, others on the sidewalks around their camp fires. We slept in a vacant yard for the night, and reported next morning to General Botha, whom we found in the citadel, where he had taken up his headquarters. I had not met him since the end of the rebellion on the day of the surrender at Reitz, and he looked a different man. To him the rebellion had been a deep tragedy of his race, but fighting for a territory which he regarded as part of his own country was another matter, and he was far more cheerful, as he sat in Governor Seitz's office telling us of the hardships encountered on his way up from the sea.

★ 106 November 13, 1915

## 'BENGAL LANCER'S' Adventure in MESOPOTAMIA

by F. Yeats-Brown, D.F.C.

THE distinguished author of 'Bengal Lancer,' 'Golden Horn,' 'Dogs of War' and 'Lancer at Large' served in France with the 5th Lancers, and with the Royal Flying Corps in Mesopotamia. He here describes how in November 1915 he became a prisoner of the Turks when the aeroplane in which he was travelling crashed in the enemy lines. Few more thrilling captures in the field have ever been recounted. Major Yeats-Brown made his escape from captivity in 1918



FLYING LANCER

Major Yeats-Brown began his military career as a 2nd Lieutenant attached to the King's Royal Rifle Corps, and was posted to the 17th Cavalry, Indian Army, in 1907, becoming adjutant of the regiment in 1913.

WHEN I reached Basra in July 1915, General Townshend had driven the Turks from Amara and was proposing to defeat them at Es Sinn; this he did by a bold and brilliant move that nearly (but not quite) annihilated the Turkish army in Iraq.

For three months I followed the fortunes of the glorious 6th Division up the Tigris; photographing the Turkish positions from our old aeroplane, bombing the enemy transport, sketching the route to Baghdad. And now, in the fine autumn weather, I looked forward to seeing Townshend ride in triumph into the city of the Caliphs, while I circled overhead in our Maurice Farman "Longhorn."

There was need for some spectacular success in Mesopotamia to offset the check at Gallipoli; Townshend was the man to restore our waning prestige. When, therefore, I rose from my bunk in a river barge an hour before dawn

on November the 13th, and swallowed a raw egg in Worcester sauce before setting out on an attempt to cut the Turkish telegraph lines west and north of Baghdad, I felt that I was in the stream of great events.

That was my last meal as a free man for two and a half years.

Unconscious of impending fate, a glow of satisfaction pervaded me. I had baked for several weeks in the T20, a red-hot little Tigris tug, and I was sick of her smell, her food, her convivial skipper. Now I would be quit of them; in a few days the battle of Ctesiphon would begin. When it was all over, I had been promised a course of training



**TOWNSHEND OF KUT**

General Sir Charles Townshend's name will always be linked with Kut, the town which he and his gallant men defended for five months against heavy odds. After the fall of Kut, Townshend was taken prisoner and interned in Prinkipo Island. He died in May 1924.

in England to qualify me as a pilot in the Royal Flying Corps.

The night sky looked good; it was clear, cool, strewn with the ineffable stars that turn men's souls to God in the desert. I thanked Him for my luck; that He should trouble about my affairs when there was so much else to claim His attention, did not strike me as at all extraordinary, nor does it now; Life has thought for even the meanest of her creatures: God knows when even one sparrow falls to the ground. The mission for which we had volunteered was to sever the telegraph line to the west of Baghdad, which linked that city with the Euphrates; then, after refuelling, to fly north, and cut communications with Mosul. But the tank space on our "Longhorn" was insufficient for the oil and petrol required for the journey, and special arrangements had to be made for carrying spare tins with which we might refill, with luck, at our first halt. With great luck, considering that we were to land in hostile territory—imperfectly mapped.

**H**OWEVER, the need for a bold stroke was urgent, and anything that would in any way tend to isolate Nur-ud-din, the doddering old commander-in-chief defending Baghdad, from Marshal von der Goltz Pasha, the German veteran of victories, who was hurrying down from Mosul to relieve him, would help our forces to win the desperate hazard.

Desperate the hazard was, as Townshend knew very well, and as the men of

Kut were soon to learn. But Townshend was not his own master. He had advised his superiors against the advance to Baghdad, and he had been overruled. So, amongst other and more important enterprises, he risked a valuable pilot, an elderly aeroplane, and the present writer on a venture whose success must always have been doubtful.

Off we went, just as the sun rose in an amethystine mist across the Tigris.

**W**e flew past the winter capital of the Parthian kings, where the Arch of Ctesiphon shadowed the Turkish trenches (and where, seventeen centuries ago, the heresy of the Manichees was first expounded), until we reached the date-gardens where Scheherazade had entertained Haroun al-Raschid; then we swung west, and I perceived that the desert, instead of being empty, as I had hoped, was swarming with horsemen and camels.

Men and beasts looked insignificant down there, like toys on a brown linoleum nursery floor, but they were dangerous toys for us; I tried to find a place that was free of them and yet near the telegraph line, and I thought that I had succeeded when I told the pilot to land near the site of Nimrod's tomb.

#### END OF AN AIRMAN'S CAREER

**C**LICK! I heard a slight cracking noise as we stopped on the smooth, hard-baked surface, but I was busy at the moment with wire-cutters and explosives and I did not know that that sound meant the breaking-up of my career as an airman.

When I looked up I saw that we had run into a telegraph post, and had splintered a wing. The pilot cursed the rear wind which had caused the machine to escape his control on landing; and I cursed the pilot, but silently, for this was no time for indulging in futile recriminations.

The leading edge as well as a main strut of our aeroplane was broken. Nothing could be done, the pilot said.

I refused to believe it. Something could be done: something must be done: yet hope sank from its high zenith to a mind-defeating nadir: I looked round, gasping and thinking (like an idiot, for meditation was out of place) that this is how a gaffed fish must feel. Was I in the same world as that of a minute ago? Had God deserted me? I saw miles of yellow sand about me, immense and magical and still; and specks on the horizon, growing larger.

With leaden heart, but light feet, I ran across to another telegraph post, leaving the pilot to ascertain whether by some miracle we might not be able to bring the old 'bus to safety. But even as I left him I knew that there was no hope, the only thing that remained was to destroy the telegraph line and take our chance with the Arabs.

**I**TIED a necklace of gun-cotton slabs round the post, inserted a detonator into the necklace, and into the detonator a pencil of fulminate of mercury to which a powder fuse was attached. Lighting a match, I touched it to the split end of the fuse, heard it sizzle, retreated to a safe distance. Looking round, I saw that horsemen were galloping towards us from the four quarters of the desert. They would be too late. I felt happier in my mind now that I had at least done something.

The post toppled over with a bang. I returned with another necklace of



**VON DER GOLTZ**

*Central Press*

Field-Marshal von der Goltz, mentioned in this page, commanded the 6th Turkish Army in 1915, and for some time directed Turkish operations in the Middle East. Previously, in 1914, he had been governor-general of Belgium. He died at Bagdad in 1916.

gun-cotton to destroy the wires and insulators. While affixing this, I noticed that the cavalry had retreated on hearing the noise of the explosion, but that some sharpshooters had skirmished closer under the cover of a fold in the ground, and were now engaged in a one-sided battle. With spurts of sand kicking up all round me, my fingers grew clumsy. It took me an incredibly long time to strike a match and put it to the fuse. But God had not deserted me, the Arabs couldn't hit a haystack.





Central Press Photos

## WAR WINGS BENEATH AN EASTERN SUN

Though it was in the skies above the Western Front that the Royal Flying Corps found its main arena in 1915, British airmen also did invaluable and courageous work at that time in Mesopotamia, where these three photographs were taken. In each case the aeroplane shown is a Maurice Farman, a slow and low-powered machine which was soon outclassed by other types. Above, mechanics carrying out repairs at the base aerodrome at Basra; in the centre, a pilot taxis in after a flight; right, riggers working on a damaged 'plane.



I still felt in some way specially protected, although I ran back the hundred yards to the aeroplane in my best time, which is about twelve seconds.

**A** HOT fire was now being directed on to the machine from ranges varying from fifty to five hundred yards. It was not a pleasant situation. Seventy or eighty miles of open plain lay between us and our camp, and we had no conveyance but a broken aeroplane. Our fate must be either captivity or death. Two of our comrades had recently had their throats cut in similar circumstances.

"Do you see that fellow in blue?" said the pilot, pointing to a ferocious individual brandishing a curved cutlass. "I think he must be an officer by the way he's encouraging the others. We'd better give ourselves up to him when the time comes." I agreed, but doubted that the time would come.

Bang! Baghdad was now definitely cut off from communication with the Euphrates. That was something, little enough, but something accomplished to earn the long repose before us.

Silence. The rising wind swept sand in our faces. The sky was of an incredible sapphire. Why was Nimrod buried here? Why didn't the enemy shoot? When would this agony be over?

#### LAST MOMENTS BEFORE CAPTURE

**I** DESTROYED a few papers and then, more with the idea of doing something than with any hope of getting away, we started up the engine. Directly we did so, the Arabs, who had been alarmed by the second explosion, again opened fire on us, although they still hesitated to advance. The situation was becoming ridiculous, so I climbed on board and determined to try taxi-ing away. The pilot, who knew the difficulties, did not accompany me.

After disentangling the wires that had whipped round the kingpost, I took the control lever, opened out the throttle, lurched off down wind. A troop of mounted gendarmes came charging towards me. I tried to swerve, but could not make the machine answer to her controls. Exactly what happened next I have never been able to recall, but I remember pulling the stick back frantically and the aeroplane giving a hop and a cough as I floundered into the middle of the cavalry. The engine had stopped, I was surrounded.

A grey-headed Turkish gendarme spurred his frightened horse up to me and held out his right hand. I grasped it in surprise and relief, and was still more amazed when I found that the

grip he gave me was an ancient and honourable one, proving that even here in the desert men are brothers.

I climbed off my perch and put myself under his protection, thinking of a night in India when I had become Master of my Lodge.

**S**HOULD I, I sometimes ask myself, have died fighting? Dispassionately, I think that that would have been the right thing to do. If one fights at all, one should not give up to save one's own skin (as I did) but only when the death of others would be involved. But I confess that in similar circumstances I would do the same again. I had done what I could. The rules of war gave me a chance to live, and I took advantage of them.

Surrendering is a sorry business: the best that can be said for it is that it is sometimes common sense.

At that moment the gentleman in blue, whose appearance we had previously discussed, appeared behind me; I turned to speak to him: he swung up his scimitar with both hands and struck me a violent blow—with the flat of it, I suppose—where neck joins shoulder. He did not draw blood but I still carry the scar. To my astonishment I saw that the aggressor, far from being an officer, was a fanatic who wore no stitch of clothing upon his hirsute and nobly proportioned person: either he had been painted or tanned by the sun to the distant resemblance of an Ancient Briton. Life is full of surprises. He looked so odd, dancing before me naked, that I began to laugh; but he hit me again, and knocked me out.

#### THEY TORE OFF MY CLOTHES

**I** RECOVERED my wits to find myself in a scrimmage of Arabs who tore off my tunic and screamed at each other, buffeting me from side to side. The old gendarme looked on with kindly eyes. Arabs will be Arabs, he seemed to think. Soon I was clad in little but shirt and shorts, with two exceptions to my semi-nakedness; my single eyeglass was still in my eye and I still wore my wrist-watch: perhaps my assailants did not know that they were both detachable. Arabs go mad when looting.

My Flight Commander, who was captured at Ctesiphon two days later, told me afterwards that when he was being mauled, he had had three live bombs on his aeroplane; he tried to tell the Arabs of the danger of touching them, but they paid not the slightest attention to his warnings: suddenly there was a terrific explosion: an arm and a boot shot sky high: one of them

had been blown to bits, but the remainder went on looting as if nothing had happened.

The number of our captors increased every minute and the gendarmes had difficulty in protecting us. All round us horsemen exulted, firing *feux de joie*. We were making slow progress towards a police post about a mile distant, but at times the throng pressed round us so fiercely that I doubted if we would reach our destination.

Presently, the police stopped and parleyed with some Arab chiefs who had arrived to claim their share of treasure trove. After an argument of which we could not gather the drift, the gendarmes shrugged their shoulders and appeared to accede to the Arabs' demands. Several of them seized the pilot and pulled his flying-coat over his head.

That was a sickening moment, for I thought that I was to be forced to witness something worse than disembowelment, and then suffer the same fate myself: my skin sweated cold; I hope that I shall never be so extremely frightened again.

The pilot was pinioned: Arabs tore at his few clothes: knives gleamed.

**B**UT he was not to be gelt, or even killed: they merely wanted his flying-coat and did not know how to pull it off without destroying it. Soon we were again being hustled along towards the police post.

All this time the Maurice Farman had been neglected, but looking back now I saw that some Arabs were stalking it, while others had begun to fire in its direction. Although, almost unbelievably, they missed it, I felt that in the long run it might be damaged beyond repair, so I tried to explain to the gendarmes that it was unnecessary to waste good lead on it, its potentiality for evil having vanished with our surrender. The impression that I conveyed, however, was that there was a third officer in the machine, and a party went off to investigate.

During this diversion I tried to jump on to a fine roan mare—easily the best horse in that assembly—whose owner had left her to go towards the machine, but I received another blow which sent me spinning. Again the brotherly gendarme came to my rescue, and gave me a cigarette. May he have bliss in the gardens of Paradise!

At last we reached the police post. As we entered through a dark passage, my rescuer noticed the gleam of radium at my wrist: with a smile he detached my watch: I hope he has it still.

A heavy door clanged behind us: our captivity had begun.

# Prelude to the Somme

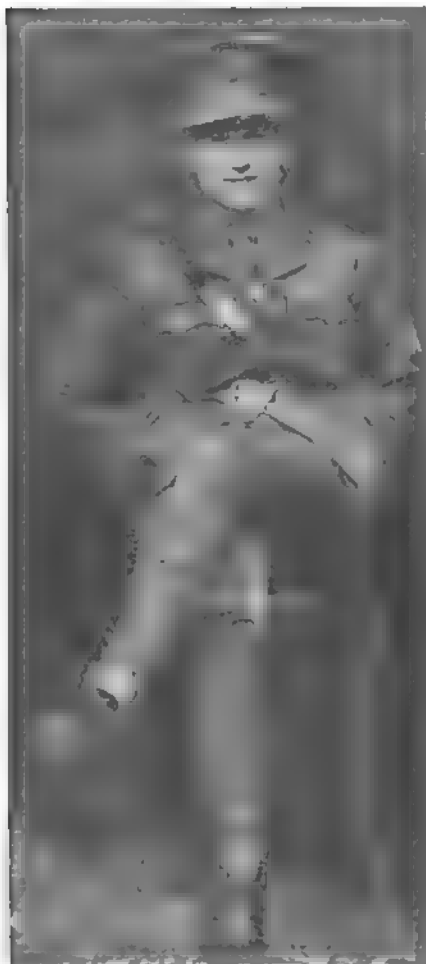
March — June 1916

ON the Western Front the first six months of 1916 were in the nature of a period of preparation for the great outburst of hostilities in July known as the battle of the Somme. Incidents of life in the line and during rest periods at this time are told in this section by Mr. Guy Chapman, Mr. Edmund Blunden and Lt.-Col. the Hon. R. G. A. Hamilton, Master of Belhaven. One of the most important battles of the period was the German attack on the Canadian positions at Mount Sorrel related by Lord Beaverbrook. Affairs at sea are touched upon by Admiral Gordon Campbell, V.C., famous commander of mystery ships, and Taffrail, well-known naval author who describes the escape of his destroyer from an overwhelming enemy gun fire. Insurrection broke out in Dublin on Easter Monday, and a vivid account of the burning of the Post Office is given by an eye witness, Desmond Ryan. The tragic loss of the Hampshire with Lord Kitchener is recounted by a survivor, Stoker Farnden.

\* 107 March 1916

## LAUGHING PRELUDE to SOMME TRAGEDY

by Guy Chapman, O.B.E., M.C.



BARRISTER AT WAR

In 1914 Mr. Guy Chapman was called to the Bar, but he immediately abandoned the Law and joined the Army when the Great War broke out. Demobilized in 1919 with the rank of Major, he embarked on a literary career and became well-known as a publisher, author and editor.

THERE was an aspect of cheerfulness in Bailleulmont. Perhaps it was due to the departure on account of infirmities of certain elderly officers of caustic tongue and uncertain temper; perhaps it was due to the bright spring weather; but probably chiefly to a well-authenticated story of a spell of rest, a holiday such as we had not known in our seven months in France.

So even the death of poor old Captain Goodman, sniped while walking in the open to avoid the slushy trenches, did not damp our spirits.

On the day after my return, I had the as yet unusual experience of relieving trenches in broad daylight. I felt as self-conscious as an amateur on a first night as I led No. 10 platoon, broken up into little blobs at a hundred yards' distance, along a ridge in the full view of an uninterested German audience. But it did not matter. Nothing happened in this sector.

It was so quiet that the French, to do honour to their allies, had abandoned their broken-down winter abodes and had dug a complete new spring accommodation some fifteen yards in advance. I imagine this to be a unique occurrence in the history of the war; but it was a less hazardous enterprise than may be thought, since the lines were here some 1,200 yards apart. Between them lay a green valley, in which partridges were nesting, sometimes coming to roost on the wire, to be picked off by experts and retrieved in daylight. The French declared that it had been a pleasant friendly war. One officer even boasted that he had visited the enemy in the village of Ransart, a tree-clustered hamlet in the German front line.

During the time we spent here, the only incident of note was of domestic character. One Sunday morning, five minutes before lunch, our mess cook stabbed the mess waiter, the alleged reason of the assault being that the victim had called his mate a bastard. This affair of honour seemed almost eighteenth century. The court probably took the same view; for the aggressor

got off with fourteen days F.P. No. 1 carried out in the mess kitchen.

Our relief was not a rumour. On a fair March morning, I rode into Barly, a village a dozen miles behind Doullens, and after a brief interview with the maire, chose the best-looking house for my own company. My early scruples in the matter of billets had long been blunted by the constant upbraidings of the dissatisfied, and I abandoned them at the sight of beds.

Four weeks were spent in this tranquil valley, hardly disturbed by the irksomeness of platoon and company training. Even the morning run became a pleasure, as our physical natures recovered from the cramping of trenches, even route marches a jaunt. The grotesque bombing practices, lustily carried out, turned to a tournament pursued with cheers and laughter; rapid wiring became a game conscientiously played. At the end of a fortnight, we were shown to the great. Both Sir Douglas Haig and Lord Kitchener expressed a desire to see the division. Both exhibitions afforded spectacles not allowed for in the regulations.

AMBERTON, our company commander, was on leave, and in his absence Leader rode Ginger, a charming chestnut mare with a turn of speed, as, some half-hour before the C.-in-C. was due, we marched up the slope of the hillside on which we were to be inspected. The battalion formed up in mass and the officers dismounted. Platoon officers and sergeants fussed about their ranks; the R.S.M. found faults. A flag fluttering in the distance warned us of the approach of the Olympians.

"Company commanders, get mounted," piped Major Ardagh. The battalion grew rigid. As I stood on the left side of the company, there broke on my ears the drubbing of hoofs behind me. I leaped into the ranks as Ginger dashed by me at a stretched gallop, bearing the dumpy figure of Leader. For a second we stood dumbly open-mouthed as the mare rushed down the hill. At the bottom was a drop of some ten feet into the road; we waited for the crash. Then from the back of No. 12 platoon rose the voice of Pte. Turnbull, Leader's bat-

man, in a passionate wail. "Turn 'im, sir, turn 'im!" he roared.

"Turn him, you bloody fool!" echoed Major Ardagh.

If Leader did not understand, Ginger did. With a side slip and a buck, she turned and swept away towards Sir Douglas's car. At the end of a hundred yards, she turned once more and, still carrying her helpless burden, galloped past our front down the road and disappeared towards her stable.

#### CAPTAIN FOR TWO MINUTES

WE had only just time to stiffen and present arms before the C.-in-C. was upon us. Not until he had reached the last of No. 2 company did I realize that I was now the commander of No. 3. Darting round to the front, I was met by a kind smile, and Sir Douglas's soft padded hand. "And how long," he asked, "have you been in command of this company?" "About two minutes, sir," was all my scatter-brain would allow me to say. "He's only temporarily in command, sir," put in Major Ardagh anxiously, frowning me down, while I blushed and stole away to the rear of the ballet. At last, after mutual expressions of esteem, the hierarchs withdrew and we marched back to billets to find our ravished company commander with a stiff shoulder—Ginger had gone straight to her stable and jolted him off against the doorway—and a stiff whisky and soda, being consoled by the lady of the house.

As a result of Leader's disaster, No. 3 was led by myself, on an immense and handsome black, on the day of K.'s arrival. It was a well-mannered beast; but it was bored. As the staff cars ran into sight, it shut up like a pen-knife and sat down. I was still furiously punching it in the ribs when the salute was given. In reverse of the interested geniality of Sir Douglas, the Minister for War was forbidding. Each of us accompanied him as he walked down the ranks, and to none did he vouchsafe a remark. Not a word, not a comment escaped him. At last, as he left No. 16 platoon, he turned to the C.O. and asked in a gloomy voice: "Do the steel helmets fit the men?" We were saved. He was human after all.

At Barly, too, came my first experience of that admirable fountain of justice, the court-martial. The accused was the elderly pioneer sergeant of the 60th; the charge, "drunk in trenches." He was duly found guilty. As he was marched out, I hurriedly turned the pages of the "Manual of Military Law," and found to my horror that the punishment was death, *tout court*. So



#### TIN HATS AT LAST

It was only after many experiments that the familiar type of steel helmet was evolved, and in the first six months of 1916 a million were issued to the troops. Above is one of the earliest experimental types, soon abandoned.

when Major George Keppel turned to me as junior member of the court and demanded my sentence, I replied, "Oh, death, sir, I suppose." Major Keppel blenched and turned to my opposite number, Gwinnell. Gwinnell, who was as young and unlearned in expedience as myself, answered, as I had: "Death, I suppose." Our good president looked at us from the top of his six feet and groaned: "But, my boys, my boys, you can't do it."

"But, sir," we protested in unison, anxious to justify ourselves, "it says so here."

It was only after a moving appeal by the president that we allowed ourselves to be overborne and to punish the old ruffian by reduction to the rank of corporal in the place of executing him; but we both felt that Major Keppel had somehow failed in his duty.

Perhaps as retribution for this blood-thirsty exhibition, I was thrown on my way home. The girth slipped, and in a moment I was lying on my hip in the road, watching the pony going hell for leather into Barly with the saddle balanced on its tail, looking like an absurd poke bonnet. When two days later the order came to move, and I could scarcely walk, I was given charge of the blanket lorries.



#### C.-IN-C. AT THE SOMME

After Sir Douglas Haig succeeded Sir John French as Commander-in-Chief of the British Armies in France and Flanders his first task was to prepare, in conjunction with Marshal Joffre, the great offensive of 1916 on the Somme. Sir Douglas made many inspections of the troops under his command, during one of which the incidents described in this chapter took place.

*Imperial War Museum*





## LITTLE HOWITZERS

### THE ENEMY HATED

Before the advent of the Stokes gun, many of the trench mortars used in France were improvised by the troops themselves, and often proved to be more dangerous to the men who fired them than to the enemy. The Stokes gun, seen above and on the right with Sir Wilfrid Stokes, its inventor, was a highly effective weapon and hurled projectiles weighing about fifteen pounds. The 3-in. mortar was used for high explosive and the 4-in. for gas bombs. The photograph below, showing a trench mortar battery in the front line, was taken near Loos in January 1916.

*Photos. V. Collipole and Central Press*





#### ROYAL HOSTS OF THE WOUNDED

The tea parties given by King George V and Queen Mary in the precincts of Buckingham Palace from the early days of the war showed their constant thought for the wounded. Above are Queen Mary and the King's aunt, Princess Christian, with a group of blind men who have just arrived for a party. Right, a young soldier, still smiling though he has lost both legs, is being carried into the riding school from an ambulance. Below, King George V is making sure that his guests are happy and feeling at home.



# LIVE HUMAN BAIT for DEEP SEA FISHING

My Mystery Ship Lured U.68 to its Doom

by Vice-Admiral Gordon Campbell, V.C., D.S.O.



'Q'-SHIP V.C.

One of the most distinguished naval heroes of the Great War is Vice-Admiral Gordon Campbell, whose amazing exploits with his "Q" ships brought him the well-deserved award of the Victoria Cross in 1917 when he was a commander.

*Elliot & Fry*

March 22, 1916

**W**as did everything we could to try to get contact with a submarine. Each day we plotted carefully all the reports received to try and see whether the enemy worked on any "system," but apparently, except that they sometimes seemed to be working in pairs, I could only imagine that each captain of a submarine had his own system.

There were one or two places that they all seemed to make for, such as the principal lighthouses. This was possibly to check their positions for navigational purposes. It appeared to be something to go on, and we frequently made for such lighthouses, so as to be off them at daybreak.

We also tried our previous scheme of stopping and being "not under control" or "disabled." On another occasion we heard two submarines talking to each other one night and they appeared to be fairly close. We thought to encourage them by making en clair wireless signals to our "owners" at Liverpool, such as, "Have been delayed by weather; am now in latitude — longitude —; expect to arrive Liverpool 6 a.m. Friday." I would then change my tune and answer myself, saying, "Your message received." By this means we hoped to convey to the submarine where we were and what course we would be steering. It never came off; possibly he was not listening on our wavelength.

We frequently sailed neutral, which needed a lot of preparation during the hours of darkness, as in addition to the

funnel wanting some special painting, alterations in the ship had to be made—the colour boards put in place, the name and port of registry painted on, and we generally removed the Plimsoll marks, as I noticed so many neutral ships hadn't got them. It was no use pretending to be something you weren't unless you attended to every detail. It will be remembered how the Emden, when she pretended to be an Allied ship, had to put up a dummy funnel to complete her disguise and have the same number as the ship she hoped to be taken for. There was one disadvantage of sailing neutral, and that was that it was expected that submarines would sometimes follow neutral ships, perhaps to find out what routes were being used or to allay the suspicions of other ships.

**A**FTER a few weeks of trying to secure a meeting with the enemy, we got news of a submarine coming down the West Irish coast, and, guessing that he would probably try to sight one of the lights at the south-west corner before starting on his career of destruction in the Channel or Bay of Biscay, we set our course accordingly for the next two days. I always had in mind that it would be an additional help to our side to get a submarine before he started his career of sinkings, as thereby many valuable lives would be saved. Daylight on March 22nd, 1916, found us steering up the west coast at 8 knots, representing a collier flying no colours bound for the North, and keeping just at the extreme submarine visibility range from the coast.

At 6.40 a.m. the port look-out—Kaye—reported a suspicious object on the horizon on the port bow, about five miles distant. A quick look with glasses disclosed the fact that it was a submarine

awash. It was barely daylight, and a small object so far away is very deceptive and might easily be a small fishing craft, especially as submarines frequently disguised themselves as sailing craft; but after watching carefully for a few minutes the submarine submerged, leaving no doubt as to what the object was. Our position at the time was latitude 57° 56' N., longitude 10° 53' W.



MYSTERY MAN

The mystery ship, Q5, which was formerly an old collier named the Loderer, masqueraded as a tramp steamer, and here is Commander Gordon Campbell appropriately dressed as a master of that vessel. Besides the adventure related in this chapter, the Q.5 figured in other exciting actions.



#### DISARMING DISHABILLE ON 'Q' SHIP

To make the disguise of the "Q" ships complete, the closest attention was given both to details exposed to view on the vessels themselves and to the appearance of the crews. These men, whose motley attire gives a convincing impression that they are seamen of a humble "tramp," are actually British officers. The photograph was taken on the "mystery ship" Q-5, which decoyed, fought and sank the U.63, as described in this chapter.

There was nothing to be done except steam quietly on, the men having already gone to their "action" stations at the first report of a "suspicious object." The submarine, on his part, would naturally expect that he had sighted us (a fairly big object with smoke) before we had seen him; so, if we wished to be attacked, no attempt must be made to escape—in fact, we had to pretend we hadn't seen him.

**T**HIS was a fairly easy matter for the next twenty minutes, though it was rather a novel sensation to us all when we realized that practically for certain in a short time we should be attacked by an invisible enemy and perhaps blown sky high without the chance of a shot in reply. I think the most apt expression I have seen applied to this sort of game is "live human bait." It seemed strange also to think that, although we made no alteration of course or speed, yet we were really the attackers, simulated ignorance, and eventually defence in order to make our offence.

So with the guns loaded, their crews concealed beside them, the man on the bridge watching for the next move of the enemy, and all the time the disinterested crew of this tramp lounging

about chatting and smoking, we waited, wondering whether we would be attacked by gun or torpedo. The wait may not have been very long by the clock, but it was terribly long to those on board.

The answer came at seven o'clock, when the track of a torpedo was seen approaching, which we made no attempt to avoid. It was fired from our starboard quarter—a bad position from the submarine point of view. The bubbles of the track passed under the fo'c'sle, which meant that the torpedo had just missed us ahead. We, therefore, maintained our course and took no outward notice, as a tramp steamer (at that time) could not be expected to know what a torpedo track looked like, and in any case the "look-outs" would neither be numerous nor very bright at that hour of the morning.

**W**E could have escaped with ease if we had been an ordinary steamer by putting our stern towards him and steaming off at full speed. He might have opened fire with his gun, but under the weather conditions prevailing the steamer would have got away.

To the men concealed at the guns and elsewhere, this was the first great test of the discipline and drill we had

been training for, as it was obvious that the submarine might fire another torpedo and perhaps successfully. All remained quiet, and the men, lounging about, continued to smoke their pipes.

One young seaman was whistling at his gun, because, as he explained when asked what he was doing, "if he didn't whistle he would get scared." A few minutes after the torpedo had missed us, the submarine came to the surface astern of the ship and steamed up on our port side. As he came up, his gun was manned and he fired a shot across our bows as a signal to stop. After firing his shot he closed down and partially submerged again, obviously ready to dive in a few seconds if we attempted to ram. But in the meantime we had proceeded with our pantomime as prearranged, and, as soon as the shot fell, the engines were stopped, steam was blown off, and the panic party got busy.

Their methods have frequently been described, and they entered into the spirit of it with more zeal than ever—a great scrambling for the boats took place, which apparently satisfied the submarine as to our bona fides, for he came right on the surface again and closed towards the ship, this before we had even got to the stage of lowering the boats. I was still rushing about the bridge and had not yet been relieved of my cap by the Navigator. The submarine was evidently in a hurry to get on with the business and



L.N.A.

#### THE KING'S SON WITH THE KING'S GUESTS

King George V and Queen Mary showed the greatest solicitude for the wounded men back from the front. They were constant visitors to the military hospitals and gave tea parties to the convalescents at Buckingham Palace. The photograph above was taken at the tea party held at Buckingham Palace on March 21, 1916 (see also the photograph in pages 556-57). Prince Albert, now King George VI, is seen with some of the guests. He was at that time a sub-lieutenant in the Royal Navy.





#### **FRIENDLY BOUT BEHIND THE LINES**

After the line of the British Expeditionary Force in France and Flanders had become stabilized it was possible to give the men periods of rest in billets well behind the lines, and there the British love of sport soon manifested itself. This friendly bout is being fought at rest billets in the Vimy Ridge sector, in 1916, but even this episode has its tragic side, for the man in the cap was afterwards killed.

*Photo, V. Gallitole*

## Leaves from the Editor's Note-Book

(Continued from page 11 of this wrapper)

**I** CANNOT refrain from quoting one or two poignant sentences from her letter:

"It's lovely to be able to recognize them and how interesting to read the books. It's indeed twenty years ago I was going through the most terrible ordeal a woman could be ever called on to go through, when my husband was killed on the 12th Oct.—the Armistice was signed the 11th November, and my second son was born 20th November. So I am like thousands of others of mothers and wives who will never forget, and our thoughts are carried out there with them and all the disabled soldiers of today."

She tells me that her second husband shares her own feelings with regard to war past and present, and that he served through the last war in the Navy, so that he is equally interested with her in the pages of *I WAS THERE*.

**A**NOTHER letter about a recognition and also of living interest, is that from Mr. Williams of Rhiwbina, Glamorganshire, who very clearly recognizes in the sepia page photograph at the beginning of Part 7 his younger brother, who is assisting in the serving of an 18-pounder gun. He is the figure immediately behind the kneeling gunner holding a shell in his hands. I cannot do better than quote Mr. Williams' letter as the extremely fine and honourable record of a soldier family:

"On front page Part 7 of *I WAS THERE*, the gunner I have circled on enclosed picture is my brother, Edward Williams, A Battery, 85th Brigade, 18th Division R.F.A. My brother was later killed in action, 17th July, 1916, at Montauban, Somme. He was then a bombardier of the 18th Div. Ammunition Column. We were five brothers then serving, all coal miners—four 1914 and 1915 stars, Edward killed in action, William died of wounds."

"I myself lost my right arm, and received 37 wounds: wounded three times inside nine hours, 15th Sept., 1916, the first day the tanks went into action. I have read the *World War*, every part. I do honestly think that *I WAS THERE* is the best yet—so true, so real."

These recognitions are of such importance to me, as constituting a permanent justification for our work, that I hope I shall receive more of them, and I also hope I shall be receiving more and more names and inquiries to publish in our Old Comrades' Corner, which begins in our next Part.

**N**ATURALLY, many of my serving readers are sending me accounts in various forms of their experiences at the fronts. Many come as articles, some of which I am able to consider quite seriously for possible inclusion as one of the chapters in our work. Others come in the form of notes of various kinds, which are not so easy to place, since they are generally rather brief and somewhat too disconnected to give an adequate account of any particular action or front-line experience. More common than either of these is the receipt of war diaries, and I am very much struck with the number of men who kept either general diaries or day-to-day notes, or wrote detailed descriptions of their experiences. In the greater number of cases, however, a diary is either too brief or too general to provide material which can be published in *I WAS THERE*.

**T**HERE are, however, exceptions, and a diary which I have gone through with considerable interest is that which was kept with astonishing and patient labour by Mr. H. V. Drinkwater, of the Birmingham "Pals" Battalion of the Royal Warwicks. I shall have very great pleasure in publish-

ing a selection from Mr. Drinkwater's diary in the section of our work dealing with the Somme Battle in 1916, and possibly another later. He performed what I can describe as nothing else than the very remarkable feat of keeping his diary posted from day to day in the trenches and at the same time writing it in an extremely vivid style as an eye-witness account of some of the most important actions of the Somme. Such a method has obvious advantages over the story written in recollection, even if, as in many cases, it is written down after relief when on the next so-called "rest" behind the lines.

**A** SECOND war diary from which I am intending to publish certain extracts is that of Yeoman Warder A. H. Cook, who writes from the Casemates of H.M. Tower of London. This also deals with the Somme, and describes Mr. Cook's experiences when he went over the top on July 1 in such a way as to represent the experiences of almost all men of the infantry—the well-named P.B.I.—on that day of blood and terror and heroic fighting. Mr. Cook has had a long and proud connexion with that fine county regiment the Somerset. Although he was afterwards awarded the D.C.M. and M.M. for gallantry, he tells me that for this action he received only the Divisional Card. Fighting soldiers will remember this recognition which came to them in the form of the Divisional Commander's personal congratulations on a particularly stout piece of work.

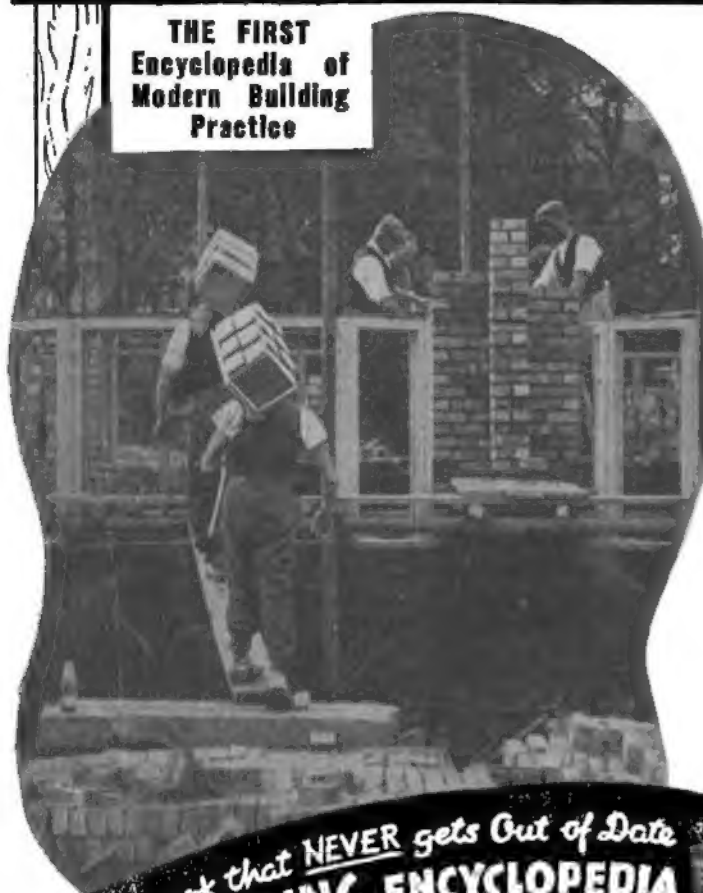
**Y**ET another war diary which is the subject of a quite reasonable pride to its writer, comes to me in note-book form from Mr. H. A. Claxton, of Sedley, Lancashire. He belonged to the 1st Battalion of the Manchester Regiment, and calls his diary, which runs to some 270 pages of a pocket memorandum book, "The Doings of an Old Contemptible." He was a bandsman in his regiment, which was a unit of the Lahore Division stationed in 1912 in the Punjab. Embarking at Karachi on August 13, 1914, he came to France via Egypt and found himself in the firing line near Laventie towards the end of October. Mr. Claxton's little diary is full of straightforward and lively descriptions of his many experiences on the Western Front, and in Italy.

**I**N 1917 he found himself as a stretcher-bearer on the Somme, and I quote his simple story of a bombing experience at Mailly Wood, where his unit was in camp. Aeroplane bombing in the Great War is usually associated with the Home Front; but it is too often forgotten that the troops in the back areas on the Western Front, including the hospitals in some cases, suffered even more severely than did civilians in England.

"21st April, 1917, about 8.30 p.m.; and, of course, the boys were getting ready to get down for the night. We heard the noise of a German aeroplane, and then our anti-aircraft guns, firing tracing bullets. We saw the searchlight playing about, and then we saw the aeroplane, which was caught in the searchlights; and it looked as though it had been hit, because it seemed to loop the loop about a dozen times, and was coming down very quickly. But to our surprise it straightened up and flew off at a terrific speed, being fired at the whole time; but it got away, and two hours later we were roused again by firing, and this time we saw a squadron of them, and they were dropping bombs all over the place. We were lucky; they never touched our Camp, but the 2nd Staffords in the next Camp to us, touched out—they dropped a bomb in the middle of the Camp, killing and wounding about 14 men. As it was getting hot here, we had to make a move."

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